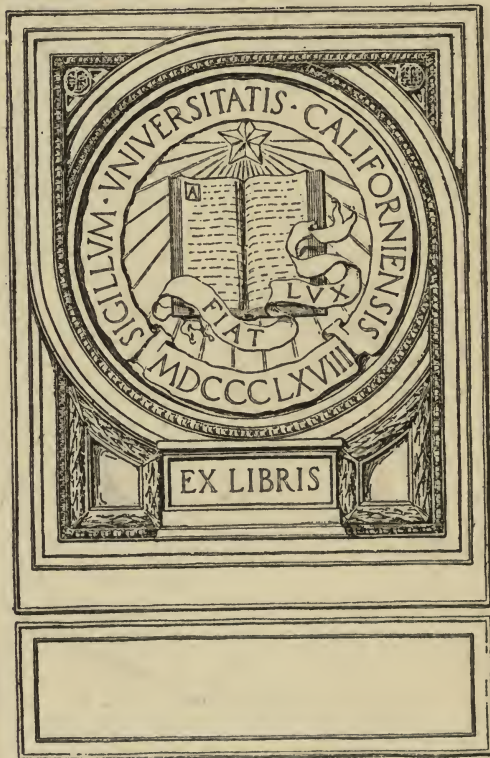


GIFT OF
M. W. Graham



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Graham*

THE CHURCH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT



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THE CHURCH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT THE PRESBYTERATE

A DEFENCE OF PRESBYTERIANISM

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM PATERSON

SENIOR U.F. MINISTER OF FRASERBURGH

AUTHOR OF

"RITUALISM EXPOSED." "LETTERS TO MY COUNTRYMEN," ETC.



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GIFT

TO MIMI
ANDERSON

Dedicated
TO
ALL PROTESTANT PRESBYTERIANS
WHO BELIEVE THEY HAVE A SCRIPTURAL CHURCH GOVERNMENT
WITH THE DESIRE
THAT THE READING OF THIS VOLUME MAY
INDUCE THEM TO LOVE THEIR CHURCH POLITY MORE
FOR ITS
ANTIQUITY, SIMPLICITY, PURITY AND
ITS ABILITY TO TRAIN
BRAVE, GOOD MEN AND BEAUTIFUL SAINTS
FOR THIS WORLD AND THAT WHICH IS TO COME.
TO THE DIVINE FOUNDER
BE ALL THE GLORY.

P R E F A C E

THE author has to acknowledge his deep obligations to the Rev. James Kennedy, B.D., of the Library of the New College, Edinburgh, whose value every student knows who ever passed through that Institution, and to whom the Free Church is under deep obligations. He has devoted his life to the cultivation of a high standard of learning among the young men, in urging them to graduate, and to his courtesy and quiet influence, that institution owes its present high standard of attainment. His knowledge of books saves students and writers a vast amount of trouble, vexation and time.

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He has to acknowledge obligations to the works of Drs Bannerman, Crawford, W. Cunningham, Brown of Langton, Brown of Bedford, Lindsay, Lightfoot, Messrs Benjamin Bennet, and Mellor. These he hopes he has sufficiently indicated in his progress. The works of Bruno, Carter, Staley, Gore, Moberly, Newman and others he has examined critically, so far as their statements have stood in his way.

But above all he has to acknowledge the guidance of his New Testament, where he has found words quivering with life, veritable facts of history, profoundest doctrines, which he has not yet fully fathomed, and the shape and polity of the Church he loves. Evangelical members of the Church of England will not admit that there is the polity of any church described or intended there, and the reason is obvious. But what is written is written. He has tried to find out what the New Testament says for itself, and he can read nothing there originally but presbyters and deacons, a presbytery for ordination and an assembly for the settlement of great questions, on the Church's doctrine and polity.

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The Church of the New Testament

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

MUCH has been written in recent years on the Church. Roman Catholics and Anglo Catholics have been shaping its polity in their own interests, and by their averments they have put an end to all controversy. If they are to be believed they have gained the battle and silenced all dissent. Protestantism they have finished by calling it a mere negation; and they are marching over the land in triumph. Presbyterianism is too contemptible, they imagine, to give it much thought.

They forget, however, that there is such a book as the New Testament, in which a great deal appears about Jesus Christ and the Gospel, a great deal about a Church which Christ established by His Apostles for the promulgation of that Gospel, and which was in existence long before any of these Catholicisms was ever heard of. Bruno, Carter, Staley, Newman, with Gore, Moberly, and others have spent their strength in recent attacks. Presbyterians have been very summarily cast out of the Church to which they believe they had a Divine right. The author is a Presbyterian by birth, and from the deepest convictions, and from

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his study of the New Testament. For all that has been said against his religion he has never yet been led to abandon it. The defence of Presbyterianism has been in abeyance for nearly a generation, but much has happened in the interval. It may seem presumptuous to many, as it has done to the author himself, that he should lift a pen in defence, where so many good men have been before ; but some have appeared who instead of vindicating the primitive religion have swelled the triumph of the enemy, by declaring that there is no form of government prescribed now, and that we have nothing better than convenience to guide us. Lectureships have been established for the defence of our faith, which have ceased to have the slightest effect. The author could not get rid of the impression that as no voice was raised for the vindication of the religion of Presbyterians, he ought on public grounds to do so, and to quiet his mind he makes the attempt. He does not write for controversy, nor does he desire to offend any one. Neither Romanist nor Ritualist will have any severe words from him. Systems and writers will have respectful consideration. God hates idolatry. The sin of sins in God's sight is idolatry. The last trick of Satan, after centuries of experiments, is to wrap up idolatry in such a way as to impose it on readers of the Bible, and to defeat the Gospel of grace by substituting some other expedient for the pardon of sin and the salvation of man. We stand by the Gospel and faith in Jesus Christ as the world's great remedy revealed in the Bible. We shall do our best to defend the original, primitive religion which Christ instituted. We avow that there is none other worthy of the name. We shall see what God's intentions

were, and how these have been interfered with. We shall endeavour to show how with its doctrines Presbyterianism stands where it did thousands of years ago, nearest to God's Word, with its principles what they were, and as efficient as ever for the great purposes of the Almighty.

CHAPTER II

WHAT IS THE CHURCH OF GOD ?

THE Church of God is the great company of the saved. It consists of every redeemed soul, out of every tribe and country, of every nationality, and in every age of this world's history, from the first redeemed sinful man, who took hold of God's promise of mercy, to the last who shall be gathered in at the end of the world, when God's great purposes of grace are complete and the judgment of the great day is fixed. That is the Church visible to God but invisible to man. By no human power can we determine who are the members of this institution. We can only look at the Church as a terrestrial organisation. We speak of the Eastern and the Western Churches, the Jewish, the Roman Catholic, or the Greek Church, the Episcopal or the Presbyterian, the Congregational or the Wesleyan. But God has only one Church, embracing all whom He saves, through the great atoning work of Jesus Christ. The same Church which we have in the Old Testament is continued in the New. In the Old Testament Church souls were saved by faith in the Saviour who was to come, in the New Testament it is by faith in the Redeemer who

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has come. God said to the guilty couple in Eden that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent. This word with others sustained the saints of old. "Your father Abraham," Jesus said, "rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." It was the one faith, the one salvation and the same heaven in the Old Testament ; it is the same faith, and pardon, and sanctification and the same eternal home in the New Testament. Abraham has to-day the same heavenly inheritance which the humblest follower of Jesus Christ expects to reach. That is the Church as seen and known to God alone. Its members no man can estimate, but we are told that they are a mighty, countless throng of redeemed souls, numerous as the stars of heaven, and beyond man's computation as the sand on the sea shore.

But there is another way in which the Church is looked at. From the earthly side, as seen by man, it is a corporation of people, who profess devotion to God. Like every other terrestrial institution, it must have a constitution with laws and officials for the regulation of the affairs of the body corporate. This necessitates two things, the outward form and the inward life. Both are from God and of God's creation ; and this demands the most serious consideration if the Church is to fulfil the great object for which God established it on this earth, and if it is to inherit the Divine blessing, in accomplishing the purpose of the Almighty among mankind. Our chief consideration will be the original form.

CHAPTER III

THE ORIGINAL FORM OF THE CHURCH. ECONOMY
OF SYMBOLS

FROM the earliest records of the history of our race we find Almighty God communicating to man the mode in which He would have His creatures to worship Him, and to give effect to that reverence to the Creator, which He has implanted as an instinct in the heart of every human being. We find Abel approaching God with the firstlings of his flock, "and the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering" (Gen. iv. 4). We are not to suppose for a moment that this was the commencement of God's intercourse with man. There is reason to believe that much instruction of the same nature was received by our first parents. The same thing is seen in the case of Noah (Gen. viii. 20). Abraham, the founder of the Jewish nation, followed this same practice of approaching God by sacrifice (Gen. xii. 7). The sure way of acceptable approach to the Deity was well known and prescribed by God Himself. It was always by blood. Any other method was marked with his displeasure, as the token of self will, and met with the reproof of God, as in the case of Cain.

A fuller revelation of God's will was made when He chose the Jewish nation to be the means of communication between Himself and the rest of mankind. He took Moses and the children of Israel apart in the wilderness, and wrote His law for them with His own hand. He instructed them at Mount Sinai, in all the details of a most

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elaborate ritual of sacrifice for the Tabernacle, and this became the centre of the worship of Israel, appointed by God who had a right to prescribe what he pleased. From the beginning it was seen that this ritual consisted of great pictures, about which God was very particular in his minute instructions, for there was a Divine meaning in every one of them. To meddle with them was death. They were all great sermons elaborated by a God of infinite wisdom and love, and any trifling with them was visited with the utmost of His quick displeasure. The great pictures of this divinely appointed ritual taught many precious truths. One was that there was a God of infinite love and compassion, that man was a sinful creature, and that there was access to God's favour for the worst, through one way, the blood of a sacrifice and the substitution of the innocent for the guilty. This was a precious prefigurement of Jesus Christ in all the marvellous treasures of his grace.

It will be seen at once that there was a similarity in God's early communications to man by ritual, and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing that God arranged was useless. In the minute details and in the care which He extended to every board and ring in the tabernacle, and to every item of the sacrifice, each part was necessary, that the eye of faith might see the unsearchable riches of Christ, and the elaborate provision made for the salvation of man. There is not a redundant expression in God's remarkable descriptions in the Levitical law. All was meant for the time in which it was published; and was intended for the ages to follow, to be a type of the fuller revelation of the good things in store in the Gospel of Christ. From the beginning of the Bible to the close,

there was the revelation of mercy, forgiveness and peace to the worst of sinners. It was always by one method, sacrifice, substitution, atonement in all God's communications to man and then heaven at last. That was the meaning of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, to meet the need of a migratory people. Thereafter the Temple was erected in Jerusalem in surpassing splendour, to be the central institution to which the representatives of the Jewish nation, the males, were ordered to repair three times a year to worship God at the altar with sacrifice. Countless wealth was expended in the erection, but God never complained of that, since it was the embodiment of the people's gratitude to the Almighty, for all the goodness showered on them by the Great Benefactor. Solomon and Israel put into marble and cedar and other precious things, the tributes of their devotion and gratitude for His numberless blessings. The Temple at Jerusalem became the dwelling-place of the Almighty, so far as that could be said of a Great Being whose presence filled the universe. It was the centre of the Jewish religion and of the symbolic worship of the Old Testament. About 1500 years before Christ the Tabernacle was set up at God's distinct command. For over five hundred years it served Israel till, about B.C. 1000, the Temple of Solomon was erected. Thereafter the second Temple, that of Zerubabel, was raised in troublous days and dedicated about B.C. 500. This was repaired and restored by Herod in the days of Christ, and was finally destroyed in A.D. 70, at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Titus the general was anxious to preserve it as a monument of Jewish magnificence in worship, but the torch of a soldier

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set it on fire, and all that was preserved was a few pieces of furniture to take in triumph to Rome. This was never repaired nor restored. God in His providential government of the world destroyed the Temple with all its elaborate symbolic worship. They had served their purpose, and when no longer needed the instruments of destruction God employed, were the Roman legions.

From the time of the exclamation of Christ on the Cross, "It is finished," the doom of the Temple and its symbols was sealed. The sacrifice of the "Lamb of God," prefigured by symbols for thousands of years, fulfilled the meaning of all other sacrifices. The blood of bulls and goats, which never could make atonement and only typified the blood that could do so, was no longer needed, and ceased to flow. The Temple disappeared, and with it Priest and Levite. They were identified with its special services and they also went their way. Temple worship and sacrifice have for about 1832 years ceased among the Jews. With a fearful sweep God cleared away the Temple, and its services, and all its ritual, to make room for a better, even the substance of all the shadows and types of the Temple; and only the record remains to show the real meaning of all the symbols of the rudimentary religion of the Old Testament.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONTEMPORARY SYNAGOGUE

BESIDES the great Temple there was another institution among the Jews, more closely identified with the life of the

people, and that was the Synagogue. From the character of God and His interest in His children, it is not to be thought for a moment that the only provision He made for their moral and spiritual welfare, was their periodical visits to the Temple at Jerusalem. In every age God had a great regard for a well-spent Sabbath day, and ample provision was made for weekly intercourse with Him. In every part of the land there existed synagogues, for the weekly meetings of the people for religious worship. There is good reason to believe that these existed in every Jewish community from an early period. Philo and Josephus believed that the institution went back to Moses (*Schürer* ii. 429). "Moses of old times hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogue every Sabbath day" (Acts xv. 21). From the days of Ezra there is the clearest proof of the restoration and existence of the synagogue (Ezra viii. 15, 21). They have continued ever since in all the changing generations and centuries of Israel's history in every land and to the present day. The synagogue existed too for the extension of the worship of God, and for the gatherings of the Jews when far away from their own land. Jewish writers believe that it exercised a great influence among them for moral, religious and patriotic purposes. They state that wherever there is mention in Scripture, of men appearing before the Lord or meetings of the elders, it means the assemblies in the Synagogue, and at their stated periodic intervals and festivals. (*Vetringa de Syn. ag.* 271.) Ezra gave new life to the institution, and at the times of the Maccabees it is said there were 394 or 480 synagogues in Jerusalem alone at the destruction of the city (*Benham's*

Dictionary 1004). Considering the population of the city, however, that seems a very large number. But next to the Temple, it had the fullest sanction of the Almighty, for the work it did among the people. There were some peculiarities about this national institution worthy of notice. The building was after a prescribed rule and order, where a population existed sufficiently large to warrant its erection. It always stood in some conspicuous place. Where there were but few Jews there was a place for prayer outside the city, as at the riverside at Philippi called the *proseuché*, sometimes open overhead (Acts xvi. 13); or by the seashore, always in the "purest" spot and away from idolatry (*Jos. Antiq.* xiv. 10, 23). The principal part of the interior was the "ark," usually a recess in the wall nearest to Jerusalem, in which the rolls of the Scriptures stood. These were covered in front with a costly screen. Facing the ark stood a raised platform or pulpit, in which there was room for the minister, and any of the officials whom he might ask to read a portion of the prescribed lesson for the day. Jerusalem embodied the fondest, patriotic instincts of the Jewish heart, and the structure was so formed, that in all their worship they looked to the centre of their own land. In the remains of the synagogues at present on the shore of Tiberias they look southward. There was no symbolic meaning in this attitude, as among modern ritualists of the High Church, among whom the eastern position has a distinct doctrinal meaning. It was entirely the Jewish expression of the fondest patriotic longings of the Israelitish heart towards home and country. Pagans who worshipped the sun adopted the eastern attitude to express their religion. With the Anglo-Catholic

section of the Church of England it is the essence of their symbolism denoting their belief in a "sacrificing priesthood." There were besides alms-boxes in the synagogue for the poor, and a chest for the trumpets and musical instruments, used at the various festivals peculiar to the Jews (*Vetringa and Leyrer l. c.*). There was also a branched lamp to represent that of the Tabernacle, and a solitary light was kept constantly burning in front of the ark and the Scriptures. There was nothing symbolical in the worship of the synagogue. Though it was connected with the covenant made with Abraham, it was worship which was mainly spiritual. It helped the life of Israel and the moral character of God's people. There was neither image nor idol, nor anything permitted to interfere with the pure worship of the Deity. Its bare, simple, white-washed walls were not relieved with picture or type, but here and there quotations from the Scriptures (*Smith's Dictionary*).

It must be also remembered that Christ was brought up in the synagogue, and of all the inhabitants of Nazareth no one was more regular in his attendance there (Luke iv. 16). He approved of it (Matt. xiii. 54); worshipped there in His youth and His manhood. Some of His mightiest acts were performed there (Mark i. 25; Matt. xii. 9; Luke xiii. 11); and some of the most wonderful words which ever fell on human ears were proclaimed therein, even the exposition of the glorious gospel and the first unfolding of God's gracious plan of redemption (Luke iv. 16, John vi. 26-59, and elsewhere). The Apostles made use of the synagogues in their missionary travels. They sought them out in the various localities which they

selected for the promulgation of the Gospel, and according to the custom of the Jews they were at perfect liberty to speak there, even though strangers. This often appears in their visits to new spheres, as related in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. The command "to the Jews first" was very strictly observed, for the convenience it afforded of meeting men who were nominally religious, and to whom the messages about their Messiah, the hope of Israel in all their generations, were always of the most intense interest. There was no institution better known among the Jews than the Synagogue, through all the changes of their history for hundreds of years, and in all lands where the Jews of the weary foot have wandered.

When God destroyed the Temple, with all its magnificent memorials of His own goodness and Israel's gratitude, with all the costly symbols of a worship which He Himself created,—when He swept away altars, priests, and levites, and brought to an end all the elaborate service of sacrifice and burnt offerings, the heart was taken out of the old religion. The shell became empty. The whole economy of typical worship ceased; but the Synagogue remained. All that was Jewish and symbolical and local came to an end. Redemption which was for all mankind was complete. Symbols of all kinds were abolished. Jesus Christ became the life, the centre of the Church of the New Testament, and everything intermediary between Him and His people disappeared. Old things passed away when Christ made all things new. The continuity of worship well pleasing to God and having the approval of Christ, must be sought for in the simple forms which He consecrated with His presence, His teaching, and His

mighty acts, and not in institutions, or officials, or functions, which died out. Old things symbolic disappeared for they were never meant to be permanent. Christ by His sacrifice, His death and resurrection, introduced the new which was to last for ever. As the key fits all the wards of the lock, so Jesus Christ filled all the institutions which prefigured Him. Continuity and succession could never more be looked for in the Temple of Jerusalem, or its high priests or its levites—never more be seen in its vestments or symbols. They remained till it could be seen how marvellously Christ filled them all, satisfying all the demands of the law, and He Himself became the Great Mediator between God and man.

CHAPTER V

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE SYNAGOGUE

THE destruction of the Temple produced a great revolution in the religious life of the Jews. The Christian Church was established for over twenty-five years and had fairly taken shape by this time. But the Synagogue came into greater prominence as the Temple was removed under whose shadow it existed. It became the conspicuous feature of Jewish life everywhere. It was the popular democratic institution of which all the community were members by right of race, and by distinct marks of nationality. It was recognised as the place of worship where on Sabbath there was the weekly assembly for prayer, praise, the reading and exposition of Scripture.

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It was the place also where the freedom of public assembly was claimed.

The disappearance of the Temple produced no change on the Synagogue, and amongst a strongly conservative people it has continued through all their generations what it was in the days of Christ. The Synagogue, and that alone, without any Jewish addition to interfere with the spiritual worship of God, which He came to establish, that became insensibly the model on which Christ and His Apostles moulded the Church of the New Testament. The truth of this will be more and more obvious as this institution is considered by what is found in the early Church. In its officials, its forms, its government, its uses and even its name, the comparison will lead conclusively to show, that the Synagogue became naturally the model for the Christian Church without any rites peculiar to the Jews. It was not the Temple nor the symbols of the Temple which were to be reproduced. The Christian religion was meant and introduced for the whole world, and could not be circumscribed by the religion of Israel. The Synagogue, existing everywhere, at once aided the intention of God, by being familiar to the Jews scattered among other nations, and where worshippers of the true God could be found. It became the evident model which Christ followed for His own Church. The facts are too numerous and the proofs are too apparent to admit of doubt. While there was certainly the evidence of the freedom of the spirit of God, and no interference of any external power, yet the Church of Christ was anything but a kind of spiritual unauthorised evolution. There was a wise hand guiding it all, and the gracious, loving spirit of God

was leading men, and there was the clearest evidence of a model which was being reproduced, refined and improved for the high spiritual purpose of meeting man's need over the world. God's intention became very obvious in producing a Church as wide as the globe, to be the common spiritual home of all the children of Adam. That was God's purpose in giving His Son to redeem mankind, and to produce a gospel of mercy and love for the human race.

CHAPTER VI

THE OFFICIALS OF THE SYNAGOGUE

WE have to consider the officials Christ found in the synagogue. In every complete synagogue he found a body of *זְבִּינִים*, *πρεσβύτεροι*, "elders," not necessarily old men, but men of leisure, "otiosi," generally ten in number whose duties led to voluminous controversy. Ten adult males were necessary to form a congregation for worship. There is no doubt about the original object of the officials. They were capable of performing many necessary and beneficent functions for the good of their congregations. There was first the *שְׁלִיחַ זִבְבּוּר* *Sheliach Zebbur* the "Delegate of the whole" the officiating minister and chief reader of the prayers. He was not the *ἄρχων τῆς συναγωγῆς* the ruler of the Synagogue. Lightfoot's classification is recognised by the Jews as generally correct, and is as follows:—Three judges to whom belonged the decision in all cases of dispute, the minister, three parnasim or alms-collectors, the interpreter or expositor, the school-

master and his assistant (*Smith's Bib. Dict.* iii. p. 1399). The Chazzan, huperetez or doorkeeper, seems of Persian origin, was school assistant. He proclaimed the commencement of the Sabbath from the roof of the Synagogue by a thrice repeated trumpet blast. All these, after election by the people, were appointed to office by the imposition of hands. The priests and levites of the Temple were born into office and required no election. They were appointed to their places by the presiding priest with anointing. But they had no recognition in the Synagogue, for there were no altars, no sacrifices, no service there in which they could have any special part. They were of all men most needed for the Temple to minister before the Lord, and to mediate between Him and the people by sacrifice. But it was wholly presbyters who were the recognised officials in the Synagogue, an entirely Presbyterian, democratic system, in which the people had the conspicuous place. The presbyters were men of good character, men of position if such were available. If no others could be found, poor respectable Jews were selected, for whom leisure must be found, with some remuneration attached to office that they could thus attend to the necessary duties of the Synagogue.

Christ found this system universally established among the Jews, wherever they existed in any numbers. In originating the Church of the New Testament, He adopted the Synagogue as the system into which He was to put a new life. It had the approval of God. It had the merit of experience and suitability to all men's instincts. It had the advantage of antiquity. It was Presbyterianism, well known in the world, ages before Christianity itself, and a

system which has outlived all others, having strange adaptability to the necessities of all nations, to all kindreds, to all climates and circumstances. It suits the poor, it suits the rich, and is adapted to all classes and conditions of men. It is a system broad enough to embrace all mankind, and as wide as the gospel of Christ, it has reared some of the strongest of men, and is so simple that a child can comprehend it. It is as vigorous to-day as when it was first projected on the earth, as capable of helping men to God, of building up good strong characters, and of guarding and guiding all the interests of the Church of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER VII

THE MISSION OF THE SEVENTY

EVERY step which the Redeemer adopted in establishing His Church is of the deepest interest as they are all related in the gospels, and the first was that which He took in the early days of His ministry in the choice of the seventy disciples. These were to go before Him through Palestine to every city to which He was Himself afterwards to go, proclaiming everywhere "The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." They were able to attest their remarkable message by wonderful signs from heaven. Everywhere their words excited the greatest astonishment. The country was moved as it was never moved before, and in course of time the seventy returned to recount the wonders which accompanied their mention of the name of Christ. What they had to do was to call attention to His

advent, and to go before Him proclaiming His appearance, healing the sick, and making His way known to His own nation. When that was done we hear no more of the seventy, they fell back into obscurity among the ranks of His ordinary disciples. That was simply a temporary mission for one specific object, the directing of the attention of Israel to the advent of the long-expected One.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TRAINING OF THE TWELVE

THE selection of the twelve Apostles was, however, with a very different object. They were Christ's constant companions, admitted into the closest fellowship and friendship. They heard His marvellous sermons, saw His mighty works, and all the time were under training for the establishment of the Church. They had the loftiest morality propounded by their Master by word and deed, and in a way which carried conviction to their hearts, But the great doctrines of His pre-existence and divinity were withheld, until they should be discovered through the mighty works which He performed. Notwithstanding His close fellowship He never let them into His secrets, by stating "I am the Son of God the eternal, I am the Messiah, the hope of Israel." He silently did His work, avoided impressing these facts by any authority; but left them to discover them by the force of companionship. Often we can conceive the thought was in their minds even when not expressed, "What manner of man is this?"

till at last they were constrained to utter it to one another as they went from scene to scene, where glimpses of the Divine majesty flashed out on them suddenly. With three years' companionship the Holy Ghost burnt into their souls as their most dominant conviction, what Peter boldly avowed for all, "Thou art the Son of God." His holy divine life, His matchless revelations of the mind of God, His marvellous supernatural work, and the amazing breadth and goodness of all His acts, convinced those men that this was verily the hope of Israel come on them suddenly, and they were ready for any service which their Divine Master desired. The training of the twelve was a quiet, leisurely, elaborate work. It took much time and thought on the part of Christ; but it was all required for the stupendous work which, in the Divine intentions, was arranging for them. It was the purpose of God to set them forth to witness before the world of what they had beheld of His glory, and to inaugurate His Church. For this great work they had need of strong convictions and brave hearts, and by the aid of the Holy Ghost this was acquired, but it took three years of constant watching and fellowship.

Till His death there is reason to believe that Christ continued to be a member of the Synagogue, and although there was a talk of excommunicating Him, it was never carried into effect. There was no word or attempt to set up any new organisation till after His resurrection; but when that was accomplished much of the forty days till His ascension was spent in the company of the eleven apostles and with the 120 disciples. As it was with Moses when he was forty days alone with God on Sinai receiving the

fullest instruction of the pattern of heavenly things for the Tabernacle, so Christ had His apostles to Himself, giving them the fullest information about the Church he was to erect. Nothing was left incomplete, so that when the day of Pentecost was fully come, when thousands of awakened souls were thrown on their hands after a single sermon, they were ready for the novel and extraordinary experience. Men might naturally have very different anticipations about the untried fishermen for the work they had to do. We have here the best evidence of what their intercourse with Christ must have been, during the forty days, from the marvellous ease with which they took up the work of evangelising, apparently at a moment's notice. When the cry rang out on the streets of Jerusalem from thousands of troubled souls, "Men and brethren what must we do to be saved?" they showed the skill and experience of experts in soul malady. In among the trembling multitudes they began to administer at once the healing balm of Christ's glorious word. Peter opened up the cleansing fountain for human guilt and misery. He pointed at once to Christ, and urged men to Repent and to be baptised every one in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Their singular facility in organising Churches showed their rare apprehension of what Christ meant them to do.

But besides, their soul discipline during the ten days of interval between the Ascension and Pentecost indicated the gracious spirit of the men, and how much they knew of the secret of soul equipment for God's service, in constant believing prayer. We often see the chariots of the gospel dragging their wheels, and ministers glad if they get one soul converted after twelve months' labours. But that is

an abnormal state for the gospel. Something is then manifestly wrong. Where are the prayers? Where is the heavenly power, the celestial fire which melts stones, and causes the cold barren rock to answer with flames?

CHAPTER IX

THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE story of the institution of the New Testament Church is one of the most remarkable that was ever penned, and shows it was wholly of God. On the Lord's ascension the last instructions to the disciples were:—"Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke xxiv. 49). They were not told how to spend the interval; but their own spiritual instincts led them to use the time in a long prayer meeting, till the auspicious moment should arrive. To say the least it was a very perplexing command, for it was not given as a suggestion; but in a clear, deliberate injunction, which set all human calculation and prudence at defiance. When we take into account the composition of that little assembly it was surprising. Peter a forward impetuous man, only a few days ago a blasphemer and denier of his Master. Thomas a hesitating doubter, James and John ambitious young men, anxious for the chief place. They lately showed such vascillation and cowardice as to flee at the appearance of peril. They made fools of themselves when Christ was with them. What will they do when He is

away? Better appoint them to Galilee, some might suggest, for their first experience in the service of their Master. Jerusalem the metropolis, where they had to keep out of sight and to meet for worship behind bolted doors, the chief seat of learning and fashion, the city of Pharisees and Sadducees and critics entailed too great a trial. Is that a proper place for the labours of a set of rough, unlearned fishermen and for the first trial of what is to be their life-work?

Is it common prudence to trust the commencement of a great enterprise to most inefficient men, to set stammering untried peasants to address the proud citizens of the capital? How we ask is Peter to conduct himself, who was a few days ago frightened into swearing that he knew nothing about Jesus, by the question of a little Jewess, who kept the door of the high priest's palace? How can such a man face the great populace? How can timid Thomas bear the look of angry, scowling men? And that John who lost his temper at a peaceful Samaritan village, to propose to call down fire to consume them? How can these feeble instruments stand the sullen looks of the surging masses of the citizens of Jerusalem? And what are they going to speak about—about that young Jew who was executed at Calvary, whom they say rose again? This was only courting defeat, and setting all human prudence and foresight at defiance. Would it not be better to appoint a select committee, who would arrange a small meeting of old people, in some obscure street or in some remote village, where in a quiet way they might make trial of their strength, and see how they could do, and thus make a humble beginning in Gospel preaching? Brushing

aside all worldly calculations, Christ gives peremptory orders. "Tarry at Jerusalem." God does not need to make experiments. The gifts of God are without repentance. It is right for a man to test his strength, that he may not go beyond his ability, and undertake more than he is sure to accomplish. But God does not require to make previous efforts. He takes a child and with him confounds the wise, and out of the mouths of babes and sucklings He perfects His praise. He took Moses, a wholly untried man, to cut a way through the sea for Israel, where human feet had never stood before. God does not require to make trials for His works.

Tremendous as the difficulties were, there was marvellous wisdom in the selection of Jerusalem for a commencement. If the story of the resurrection was not true, where could it be contradicted so easily? Tens of thousands were eager to disprove the narrative, if it could have been denied. If Christ was in the grave which they had sealed and guarded, could not the enemies of the Cross hasten to prove it? And as the story was correct, what better place could there be for proclaiming it than among the implacable enemies of the Lord? God's ways are always best. We have the proof of the infinite wisdom of the Almighty. How readily the enemies would have seized it, and declared it to be a trumped-up story, if the apostles had selected some obscure, out of the way corner? It was proclaimed before the world in the most conspicuous place, where God challenged contradiction. There were divine reasons for the clear, peremptory orders—"Tarry ye in Jerusalem."

The work was great, but one word in the narrative is worthy of notice. "They all continued with one accord

in prayer and supplication" (Acts i. 14). They were ordered to tarry, and their own gracious instincts led them to prayer; but the time of their tarrying was not specified, and we know it lasted for ten days. It is conceivable that they might be in despondency at the promise not coming on the third or fourth or seventh day of their pleading. It is possible to conceive of their falling into mutual heart-burnings and recriminations at the delay. One man might say: "It is Peter's fault that the answer is so long in coming. How could the power of God descend on the man who denied his Master with an oath?" Another might say: "It is the fault of doubting Thomas that the promise tarries"; or others might say: "It is John who is to be blamed for his proud, ambitious, place-loving spirit." All that would have been human and natural. But the Scriptures are explicit. They continued with one accord, and their joy was as striking as their unity. Thus in the attitude of constant prayer they waited with expectation. The result was worth all this trouble and preparation.

"The Day of Pentecost was fully come when they were all in one place, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. There were dwelling at Jerusalem devout men out of every nation under heaven. When it was noised abroad the multitudes ran together, and were confounded because that every man heard them speak in his own language" (Acts ii. 1-7). The mighty transforming power of the Holy

Ghost was everywhere. Hearts that were like stone melted, and three thousand souls were converted at a sermon. Never was there a day like that. It was the laying of the foundation of the Church of the New Testament, amidst scenes of spiritual power never witnessed on this earth before—the beginning of the greatest institution in this world's history. Although there had been scenes of unparalleled interest in those streets, spectacles of triumph and of blood, never was there such a time to which God Himself contributed, when the promises of the Almighty for thousands of years ran together in a mighty river of fulfilment. In a few weeks many of these devout converts went to their own lands, with the first of Pentecostal blessings in their souls, and to be the pioneers of the Church among their own kindred and people.

The simple, untried fishermen followed the instructions which their Master had given them, and put principles into operation which He taught them, and the result was astonishing in the amount of approval God gave them in all they said and did. They spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and prodigies of grace followed them wherever they went. It was soon seen that this new element could not combine with the old Judaism. New assemblies had to be organised, for every day was adding to their numbers, and the little band of 120 was speedily increased by an additional 5000 men and women.

They followed the system which they knew best, indeed the only thing they knew, that of the synagogue—the Presbyterianism which they understood, which God approved, and which their fathers followed for thousands of years. Now, however, it became the synagogue purified and

divested of everything superstitious and everything associated with Judaism, and this reformed synagogue became the model of their newly-formed communities. With the love of order peculiar to the Jews, the Apostles placed their great following into the shape of well organised congregations, under the open heavens, for the pure, simple worship of the Church of the New Testament. The preaching of the glorious Gospel occupied the conspicuous place as it was originally designed to do, for the conversion of men and the building up of the Church of God. The first duty they attended to, seems to have been the election and the ordination of Elders or Presbyters of their own, from among the first fruits of their ministry, or from among the seventy, for the proper and systematic oversight of the congregations (Acts xi. 30; xv. 4; xiv. 23). The Church of the New Testament was born in prayer. It was purely God's creation, and several times in the history of men God has done the same thing, when the truth was almost lost for the world.

CHAPTER X

THE NAMING OF THE CHURCH

At first they seem to have adopted the old name of the synagogue for their newly-formed Christian congregations, for we read in James ii. 2: "For if there come into your *assembly* a man with a gold ring"; in the original it is *synagogue*, but evidently that word would be afterwards found inconvenient, though there is reason to believe it was in use at the beginning, and the word Church

(*ecclesia*) came to be used to designate the Christian assembly.

The word *Ecclesia* was well known among the Greeks, signifying an assembly of free citizens, called out by herald to discuss public affairs, though at times an assembly of any sort, as in Acts xix. 32, where it is applied to the unruly mob at Ephesus which Demetrius the silversmith stirred into riot. The Church thus consists of those whom Christ has called out to be witnesses for him in the world and to testify of His grace. On two occasions Christ used this word Himself, and so far originated and approved of its use. When Peter made his memorable confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matt. xvi. 16), Christ made use of the memorable words, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church" *Ecclesia* (Matt. xvi. 18). On another occasion Christ was instructing His disciples concerning their duty to an offending brother. In the last resort they were instructed to tell it "to the Church" (Matt. xviii. 17). In both instances the word meant the congregation of the faithful; in the first it meant the whole, and in the second only a portion of the congregation. The name *Ecclesia*, the Church, was thus originally used by Christ to designate His Kingdom on the model of the synagogues.

In its use in the New Testament, sometimes it is used to denote the Christians of a country, as "The Churches of Galatia" (Gal. i. 2); "The Church throughout all Judea and Galilee, and Samaria" (Acts ix. 31, R.V.); four of the oldest and most valuable manuscripts extant being in favour of that reading; "The Churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess. ii. 14). Again it is

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used to denote the Christians residing in the same city : "The Church that was at Antioch" (Acts xiii. 1); "The Church which was at Jerusalem" (Acts viii. 1); "The Church which is at Cenchrea" (Rom. xvi. 1). Again the word is used for a small meeting of Christians, met for edification in a single house, *e.g.* "The Church which is in the house of Nymphas" (Col. iv. 15) and in the "house of Philemon" (Phil. 2); "The Church in the house of Priscilla and Aquila" (Rom. xvi. 5; 1 Cor. xvi. 19). In no case was the word used for a building, as is common in the present day, but always to those who profess devotion to Christ; and it came to be applied to the body of believers over the world. (Macleod.)

CHAPTER XI

THE OFFICIALS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

THE Head, the Founder, the Redeemer of the New Testament Church was Jesus Christ Himself, the Prophet, Priest and King of His people.

From the beginning He made His baptized followers members of the institution, with full rights to all the privileges of the corporation. The humblest of them had free access to God, while He remained their great Head and living Centre. As He was sent by the Father, so He sent forth Apostles to originate and organise the Church in His Name. They were His delegates everywhere to preach the Gospel and to institute His Church.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, where the various details of the New Testament Church are set forth very minutely,

we read that God "gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ," (Eph. iv. 11, 12). Some of these were extraordinary, called into existence for extraordinary and temporary purposes. These were the Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists. But others, the Elders and Deacons—pastors and teachers—were the ordinary officials, with other descriptions in another epistle, to do the well-known work of the ministry in the New Testament Church, and the first of these are the Apostles.

CHAPTER XII

EXTRAORDINARY OFFICIALS

I. THE APOSTLES

THE Apostles were chosen at an early period of Christ's mission, and underwent a most thorough and elaborate training for their great work in establishing the Church. With the miraculous power of God they ventured fearlessly into barbarous regions, where outrageous opposition faced them, and there planted Churches. These flourished in difficulties till ancient idolatries tottered to the ground, and, in an incredibly short time, hoary systems of paganism gave place to the pure religion of the Gospel. When one locality was captured and a Church was instituted, then they moved to other regions to repeat the same operations. From the nature of their work—the planting of Churches and the organising of congregations—

this could only be temporary, to be followed by other officers who would conserve their conquests and build up the spiritual body of Christ.

Besides, the special qualifications of Apostles which were adopted by themselves at an early date, led to a restricted number and duration of office.

(1) They must be companions of the Lord, and eye-witnesses of His life, from the day of His baptism to the time of His ascension, and thus give personal testimony of His resurrection. Not many of the disciples even could fulfil this condition (Luke xxiv. 46-48; Acts i. 21, 22; 1 Cor. xv. 8). "We are witnesses," said the Apostles, "of all things which He did, whom they slew and hanged on a tree"; and their testimony was complete when they could add, "Him hath God raised up the third day and showed Him openly." "He commanded us to preach and to testify that it is He who was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead" (Acts x. 39-42). Without the eye-witness of the glory of Christ in His work and person, apostleship was impossible.

(2) The personal call and commission of Christ must be clear. "He called unto Him His disciples, and of them He chose twelve, whom He named Apostles" (Luke vi. 13). "He ordained twelve that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out devils" (Mark iii. 14, 15). Matthias and Paul were no exceptions to the needed qualifications. It was Christ who sent them (John xx. 21).

(3) Endowed with the Holy Ghost, they had the power of working miracles. They were preachers of infallible

truth ; and to attest it to an unbelieving, critical world, they were inspired, possessed the gift of healing, and of tongues, as the signs of their apostolic calling (2 Cor. xii. 12).

(4) They possessed unlimited authority to be the representatives of Christ. Marvellous were their labours, astonishing were their wisdom and success. They planted Churches, ordained permanent office-bearers, and possessed supreme authority and jurisdiction. They could have no successors as eye-witnesses of the Lord's life, ministry, death and resurrection.

One case there was of the choice of Matthias as successor for the empty place of Judas. But Peter explained that it was of God's special appointment to fill up the number, and to fulfil a prophecy (Acts i. 20) : and the appointment was made by God's final decision (Acts i. 26). But when James the Apostle was put to death, there was no attempt at a successor. The Apostle Paul was one born out of due time by the direct agency of God. God Himself found him, qualified him, and made him in his own way next to Christ—one of the greatest blessings to the world for all ages. Epaphroditus is called an Apostle in Philip. ii. 25, and Barnabas is called Apostle ; but they were only Apostles in a secondary sense. The true Apostle was the delegate of Jesus Christ—Epaphroditus was only the messenger of the Philippian brotherhood, and Titus was also—and others—the messengers (apostles) of the Churches (2 Cor. viii. 23). Whatever other apostles or messengers there were, God's true Apostles were always called the "Twelve." Those who endeavour to reproduce and perpetuate the office of the Apostle, beget

shadows for the princely men of God's own formation. They were men mighty in the scriptures, who preached with the power of the Holy Ghost, and miraculous signs followed in attestation as their credentials. The mighty instrument by which they turned the world upside down was the preaching of the Word. Leo XIII., the Pope of Rome, it is believed, never preached a sermon, and was never known to be the means of saving a soul. Many false apostles appeared after the twelve, but they were never able to impose on the Church, which had great efficiency in "trying the spirits." The fictitious apostles of modern times are man-made, entirely destitute of the signs of apostleship. Lords over God's heritage are expressly excluded from the New Testament Church. They are not of God's appointment, nor according to apostolic conditions. The Apostles having fulfilled the purpose of God, disappeared. Their work was carried on afterwards by the permanent officials, and they were not required. The Apostles were specially called and prepared for setting the Church in order. There was no such official in the synagogue which, though it became the model of the working effective Church of the New Testament, yet supplied no precedent for the Apostle. God's intention was to save the world, and the first of His agents was the appointment of His twelve Apostles.

II. THE PROPHETS

In the enumeration of the officials in Ephesians there are the Prophets, men who had a special understanding of the mind of God, so as to be able to reveal truth with

authority, and to declare future events as well. There can be no doubt of their existence, and that with the Apostles they held the most prominent place among the officials. We must remember that the circumstances of the Church required special agents of the kind. The canon of Scripture was not yet complete, and until the revelation of all necessary truth was closed and in writing, men were specially inspired to receive the mind of God and to reveal it. It was only what the Lord Himself distinctly promised. As Christ was leaving the disciples He told them : "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you unto all truth : for he shall not speak of himself ; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak : and he will show you things to come" (John xvi. 12, 13 ; xiv. 26). Others attained the understanding of the mind of God by their close study of Scripture and by prayer ; but these men by special gift came to know the will of God, and proclaimed it. Men and women shared in this divine favour. Philip, one of the seven deacons who dwelt at Cesarea, had four daughters who prophesied (Acts xxi. 9). This did not only mean that the Prophets or Prophetesses had great insight into the truth of God, and could employ "magnetic" speech in declaring it. But it signified besides, an unusual knowledge of the future, and that they were able to predict coming events. Agabus, a Prophet of Jerusalem, came to Cesarea, "took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet, and said, 'Thus saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles'" (Acts xxi. 11). The gift of prophecy

in the early apostolic days included two things—the ability to declare the divine truth of the Gospel ; and also by the inspiration of God to predict future events. No doubt God saw that this gift was specially needed at the time for the progress of the New Testament Church. But when He found that the gift had served His purpose, He withdrew it as of no longer use. The perpetuation of it would serve no necessary end. But without any doubt these two officials, the Apostles and Prophets, stood above all others so long as the miraculous was required in the founding of the Church.

III. EVANGELISTS

In the fourth chapter of Ephesians there appears a third class of officials named Evangelists, who had a prominent place in the New Testament economy, though not equal to the two already named, whose functions were also temporary. There were various men who occupied the position of being delegates or assistants of Paul, who were designated by this name, such as Timothy and Titus ; “Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord” (Eph. vi. 21) ; “Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labour and fellow-soldier” (Phil. ii. 25) ; “Mark, who is profitable to me for the ministry” (2 Tim. iv. 11) ; “Luke only is with me” Crescens and Titus (2 Tim. iv. 10, 11) ; “Sylvanus, a faithful brother” (1 Peter v. 12) ; Above all others Timothy was beloved and trusted (Phil. ii. 20). They were all men of estimable character ; but they were not connected with any permanent work or scene of office. They were associated with the Apostles in missionary journeys ; and in the special duties with which

they were entrusted from time to time, a clear conception can be formed of their great value to the Apostles.

We read that if the contributions of one Church were to be carried to another, it was an Evangelist who was entrusted with the duty (1 Cor. xvi. 3 ; Phil. ii. 25 ; iv. 18). If an inspired message was to be conveyed to a distant Church from one of the Apostles, an Evangelist was the bearer (1 Cor. xvi. 10 ; 2 Cor. vii. 6-8 ; Eph. vi. 21, 22). If an Apostle had laid the foundation of a new Church in the conversion of souls, and hastened away to resume the same work elsewhere, an Evangelist was left behind to set all things in order (1 Tim. i. 3 ; 2 Tim. iv. 9-13 ; Tit. i. 5 ; iii. 12). If dissensions sprang up, or heresies made their appearance, an Evangelist was sent to the scene of disturbance (1 Cor. iv. 17 ; Col. i. 7 ; iv. 12). Even the administration of baptism seems to have been left very much to them (1 Cor. i. 17). Such were the special duties to which Paul from time to time deputed the Evangelists, till stated pastors and elders were appointed after the model which Christ approved in His institution of the congregations of the Christian Church.

Those who maintain that the government of the Church of the New Testament was prelatic, adduce the cases of Timothy and Titus as diocesan bishops from the subscriptions of 2 Timothy and Titus. But they must be driven hard for arguments, when they overlook the solid proofs of historical facts. It is to be noticed that in the revised version there are no subscriptions such as accompany the received version. In 2 Timothy the statement that Timothy was ordained first bishop of Ephesus is omitted, having been only added by some unauthorised penman of

prelatic leanings, long after the days of the Apostles. There is not one case of "diocesan episcopacy" in the Word of God. The Scriptures bear the clearest testimony that Timothy was not entrusted with any permanent work or office at Ephesus. It is clear from Acts xx. 28, that at the time when the elders or bishops of that Church came to Miletus at Paul's invitation, and when there was a fully organised Church in that city, Timothy was not among them, and had no place or office. He was employed elsewhere, and could not have been the diocesan bishop of Ephesus.

In the only mention of his name with Ephesus, it is clear he was there for a special purpose, and only for a time. Paul and Timothy had been labouring at Ephesus when the Apostle was called away to Macedonia (1 Tim. i. 3). Dangers of false doctrine threatened the Church of Ephesus, and Timothy was "to abide there still" to counteract the evil (v. 4). It was not for any permanent work, but to meet this crisis. The charge to Timothy indicates no permanency. "I exhort thee to tarry still at Ephesus" (1 Tim. i. 3, R.V.) is not the language of one conferring a continuing appointment. He was simply Paul's delegate for a time, and for certain specified duties. Paul had the expectation of returning (1 Tim. iii. 14; iv. 13). Besides, Timothy seems to have been called away from Ephesus soon after, for other places required his faithful, zealous labours. "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me" (2 Tim. iv. 9) "before winter" (v. 21), wrote the aged, venerable saint, no doubt a request which was obeyed. The reason for this entreaty was that all other companions were away from him except the constant

loving Luke. Demas forsook him, preferring the world, and had gone to Thessalonica, Crescens to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. There is the distinct intimation (v. 12) that at the date of 2 Tim., Tychicus was sent in his stead to Ephesus, and the information was confirmed by the request that Timothy should take with him the cloak (*φαιλόνην*), the Latin *penula*, a travelling cloak with a hood for protection against the weather, which Paul had left with Carpus. The Romish winter was a very rigorous one, and the cloak would be a special boon to keep the old blood warm. It seems clear from all this that the special work at Ephesus was completed. Another had been sent there to succeed him. The present sphere of Timothy's labour was Troas. Thus there is no evidence from Scripture that Timothy was first bishop of Ephesus or even a bishop at all. There is no evidence that he was even a presbyter or elder, but rather the reverse. The evidence of Scripture is clear upon this point, that Timothy was no more than a devoted, trusted evangelist, permanently a *deacon*, and a very beloved man of a clear, sound judgment, who knew what was needed in emergencies and how to do what was right, and one whom Paul could trust when all others forsook him, or left for other spheres. The attempt to build up prelacy on the bishopric of Timothy is a pure fabrication, unworthy of men who ought to have facts rather than theories.

A similar argument is built upon the subscription at the end of the Epistle to Titus, as to Titus being bishop of Crete. The revised version omits these words also, and for any reference to Titus as in this position, the words are

treated as a forgery, and of no divine authority. The Scriptures are entirely silent about any permanent relation between Titus and Crete. Not only so, but as in the case of Timothy, Titus was left in Crete for special temporary work. The Apostle Paul and he had been labouring there, and, after founding a Church in Crete, the assistant remained behind to arrange the ecclesiastical polity. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge" (Tit. i. 5, R.V.). It is evident he soon left Crete after his special duties were fulfilled. "When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, give diligence to come unto me to Nicopolis: for there I have determined to winter" (Tit. iii. 12). That he went to Nicopolis is very certain, and there is no evidence that he ever returned. From what is believed to be Paul's last word to the Church (2 Tim. iv. 10), Titus, it is said, was labouring in Dalmatia, very far from Crete. Alford, an Episcopalian and no mean Biblical scholar, says (*Proleg.*, vol. iii. 108):—"Timothy and Titus as Evangelists were assistants of Paul, and were instructed to remain for special work at Ephesus, and at Crete. But there is no evidence of any permanent relation between them and these Churches, where it is imagined they exercised diocesan authority, or any work inconsistent with that of Evangelist." It is surely pitiful to be told that the attempt to establish prelacy on the case of Timothy and Titus is pure imagination; but it is not the only fancy we shall have to consider in a case where there is no evidence in the Word of God of any one instance of diocesan episcopacy, or any such intention

among those who inaugurated the Church of the New Testament.

Having considered the extraordinary agents, we have to examine the *ordinary* ones whom God chose to be His permanent officials, to carry on His work in conserving the doctrine and shaping the practice of the same, as instructed by Paul in 2 Tim. ii. 2. This was on the model of the synagogue of the Jews in the Presbyters and Deacons.

CHAPTER XIII

ORDINARY OFFICIALS

1. ⲁⲓⲛⲓ—πρεσβύτεροι—ELDERS

THE most important class of permanent officials in the New Testament Church comes to be considered, the Elders or Presbyters. There was no novelty about the Elder. From the earliest records of Jewish history the Elder was well known in all their generations. Even in Egypt the civil government was carried on by Elders. At the funeral of Jacob, when Joseph went up to Mamre to bury his father in *the ancestral grave of his fathers*, the cave of Machpelah, "all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt accompanied him" (Gen. l. 7). There were, besides, Elders in Egypt over the Israelites. When Moses was sent down to that land to achieve their deliverance, it was to them he made the first overtures for breaking the bondage of Egypt (Ex. iii. 16; xii. 21). In the wilderness the office was enlarged, the spiritual interests were combined with the

secular (Num. xi. 25). They appear in the days of the Judges (Judges viii. 14); in the days of Elisha (2 Kings vi. 32); and during the reign of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xix. 5-8). They are frequently mentioned in the life of Christ. The chief priests and elders asked Him when teaching in the Temple, "By what authority doest thou these things?" Jesus was led away to the high priest, "where the scribes and elders were assembled." "All the chief priests and elders took counsel to put him to death" (Matt. xvi. 21; xxi. 23; xxvi. 59; xxvii. 20). The rulers and elders were associated in the trial of Peter and John, as to the power or authority by which they professed to have healed the lame man at the gate of the temple (Acts iv. 2-7). The *πρεσβυτέριον* assembly of Elders is mentioned in Luke xxii. 66; Acts xxii. 5.

Among the Jews there was no official better known than the Elder. It was the established order of the country. When the Christian Church was commenced the apostles saw the necessity of having officials for its superintendence, similar to those among their nation, and able to perform various duties for the good of the members. A strongly conservative people would naturally adopt that with which they were familiar. Besides they knew the office was capable of ample reform for social, religious and administrative purposes. Thus, converted men were chosen for office, retaining the old name; but with special relations to the necessities of the new communities. The Christian Jews conformed to the religion of their fathers in all essential elements, even in circumcision, Sabbath observance, and in Temple worship itself, and the distinctive doctrines of the Christian faith were at first only

superadded to the old. While the first great question which was stirred in the New Testament Church was the binding obligation of circumcision in an organisation which was meant for the world, and liberty was established, there was no thought of changing the officials. The Elders or Presbyters were chosen and installed as the medium of all official communication with the mother Church or the other Churches east and west. The Presbyters were associated with the Apostles in convening the Assembly of Jerusalem, in the superscription of the decree arrived at, and in the general settlement of the dispute between the Jewish and Gentile Christians (Acts xv. 2, 4, 6, 22, 23; xvi. 4). When Paul returned to Jerusalem in his last visit, it was to the Elders he gave a report of his missionary labours and triumphs in the Gospel (Acts xxi. 18). The appointment of the Christian Presbytery was the oldest institution of the Church of the New Testament, and consequently the Presbyterate. In the extension of the Church the appointment of Elders (Presbyters) of the first fruits of their labours was the earliest feature of the missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiv. 23). This course was followed in all other places where they laboured, or where Timothy or Titus or other assistants remained to complete their work and establish Christian congregations.

In Acts xx. 28, we have a fuller description of the Presbyters. On Paul's last missionary journey he came to Miletus, whence he sent an invitation to the Elders of Ephesus, thirty-six miles away, to come to him. On their arrival, in his ever memorable address he reminds them of his labours, predicts that he shall see them no more, and

charges them that he has "not shunned to declare to them all the counsel of God." "Take heed therefore unto yourselves," said the Apostle, "and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (bishops) to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood. For I know this that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears" (27-31).

In the weighty words which dropped from the lips of the Apostle, he called the elders (or presbyters), overseers (or bishops). The first designated the office, the other the work to be done. The old Jewish presbyter was an overseer. Their work was "to feed the flock of God," in season and out of season, with the tenderest concern. The presbyters were bishops for many generations, the two words were interchangeable. The humblest elder in the New Testament Church is a bishop in the scriptural sense, and according to the original constitution. In every congregation there was a plurality of presbyters or bishops, all on the same footing, all equals. For nearly 150 years there were no other ordinations than those of elders and deacons, there was no higher office than presbyters. Peter, whom the Roman Catholic Church claimed to be their first Pope, knew no higher dignity in God's house than the simple eldership. Christ spoke in unmistakable language when He said, "Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And

call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased" (Matt. xxiii. 8-12). Peter denounced anything like lordship in the Church, and condemned in unmeasured language any spirit of self-seeking or elevation among the servants of Christ.

Further, the elder and bishop mean the same individuals and the same officials, for in Titus i. 5 we have Paul's instructions to his deputy "to ordain elders in every city as I have appointed thee. If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry," and so on, the very same qualifications as we have in 1 Tim. ii. 2. "A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife," and so on. The qualifications are the same, the individuals are the same, the offices are the same. 1 Peter v. 2 urges the elders to do the work of the bishop. "The elders which are among you I exhort. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof." Another testimony is to be added to the accumulating proofs, that the Apostolic Presbyterate was the original form of the Church of the New Testament.

Another source of evidence is that furnished by all the best Anglican authorities. Writers like Alford, Lightfoot, Sanday, Hatch, Hook, Professor Gwatkin, and Hastings' Bible Dictionary, Canon Robinson in the "Encyclopedia Biblica," agree that in Apostolic times there was no distinction between the elder and the bishop. Lightfoot, "Christian Ministry," p. 151, says: "The name of Pres-

byter then presents no difficulty. But what must be said of the term 'Bishop'? It has been shown that in the apostolic writings the two are only different designations of one and the same office."

But there is conclusive evidence of another kind that the elders and deacons were established at the beginning. In the Phil. i. 1 we have the constitution described of an early Christian congregation. "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." These were the constituent elements of the Church, members, elders or bishops, deacons. The permanent officials of the Church were elders and deacons. Other congregations were constituted similarly to that of Philippi, with only two officials, elders and deacons. Men would fain make out a gradation of three—bishops, priests and deacons. They had to wait for that, however, for about three hundred years, when these and many other changes took place in the primitive Church, on the reconstruction of the Church when it came into alliance with the Empire.

Everything was arranged for the government and the discipline of the Church by presbyters, and we see it in operation in the Assembly at Jerusalem. The churches consisted of saints, elders and deacons, or saints, bishops and deacons, as in Philippi (Phil. i. 1). We have samples of what was common, several bishops in one congregation—that is not Episcopacy. There are numerous congregational bishops or elders, but such a thing as Diocesan Episcopacy is never mentioned and was wholly unknown, for about three centuries. There is no trace of bishops as a distinct order in the New Testament.

II. Διάκονοι—THE DEACONS

Whether the original idea of deacons in God's house took its rise from the existence of the parnasim in the synagogue, who had charge of the poor and charities, like the Board of Guardians, it is not easy to say. But from a very early time there were among the Jews "seven men, princes, who saw the face of the King at any time" (Jer. lii. 25). Daniel, when he was prime minister in Persia, carried the same custom thither (Esther i. 14), so the same number of men existed, and this may have given origin to the seven deacons for the Church. At a very early date a special exigency arose in Jerusalem, which the apostles had to face. Elders had been elected previously it seems. As it is now in non-Christian lands, men who were converted and accepted the gospel were thrown out of employment, and widows and orphans had to be provided for; the apostles originated weekly collections for the poor. This very speedily accumulated in their hands, and they were overpowered with the necessary secular work of serving tables, and the administration of temporalities. Through little oversights, murmurings arose between the Jews and the Greeks, who imagined that their widows were neglected. It pressed at first at Jerusalem, where the apostles called the Church together to consider a proposal, that they should look out seven men of good report, full of the Holy Spirit, and of wisdom, to take complete charge of this. It belonged to the members, in recognition of their position, first to consider this question. It met with the approval of the Church, and "the whole multitude of the disciples" being convened, they selected seven who should

be "helps" to the apostles in these important matters, so that without interruption "they might give themselves to the ministry of the word of God, and to prayer" (Acts vi. 1-6). The seven were thus entrusted with the secular affairs of the Church. The name deacon was not given to them at this time, but it arose from the service, "diakonia," they were rendering to the Church, and it meant one that serves or ministers. The office came to be recognised all over the Church as the officers who had special care of the poor, and the temporalities of the congregations. At first these were very insignificant, notwithstanding the readiness of those who had means to respond. They had no churches to begin with, no edifices to watch over. There were churches in private houses, assemblies in the open air ; the possession of buildings was a gradual addition in the various localities where the Church of the New Testament had got a footing. From their names it is believed the original deacons were Greeks, which indicated a generous admission to those among whom the complaints originally appeared. There are minute instructions regarding their qualifications, which showed that the office was designed to be permanent in the New Testament Church. "The deacons must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre ; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved ; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless" (1 Tim. iii. 8-10). These minute instructions indicate that the office was adopted in all the churches visited by Timothy.

The exigency which called the deacons into existence in Jerusalem soon arose in other places, and the same course

was followed in Philippi (Phil. i. 1). It was adopted also in Rome. "He that hath ministry" (deacons) is instructed "to wait on his ministry" (deaconising) (Rom. xii. 7). With the faithful discharge of these important duties the deacons might well take their place among the "helps" so honourably mentioned in the original constitution of the Church, and the place which this beneficent institution, the caring for the poor, was to occupy in the New Testament Church. "The poor ye have always with you," the Lord said. The special appointment of men for this needful duty showed God's consideration for His poor ones. Apostles and elders were not wholly relieved from every service, for they too mingled with the relieving of the wants of the poor. There was a weekly collection for them by special instruction, and this was distributed by those officials. Paul and Barnabas were entrusted with this collection for Jerusalem. "Now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints, for it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem" (Rom. xv. 25, 26). The deacons were not prohibited from preaching. Stephen, one of their number, was the first martyr after the inauguration of the Church.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DIDACHÊ

To add only another source of evidence. In 1877 part of an ancient Greek manuscript was discovered, containing the Christian writings called, "The Didachê, or the teaching

of the twelve disciples"; or, "The teaching of the Lord by the twelve Apostles to the Gentiles." It was discovered in the library of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The volume is dated A.D. 1056, and was published in 1883. But from internal evidence which is generally accepted, the original of the MS. must have been written from A.D. 96 to 110 by some penman in Egypt. It may thus be the oldest Christian writing extant next to the Bible. The contents, like many other documents of ancient times from the fathers, are of very little consequence. The principal value of the Didachê is the testimony it furnishes, that at the date of its composition, the ordinary permanent officials are the elders or bishops and deacons, and there is not the least hint of any higher office. It describes the services which the extraordinary officials, the apostles, the prophets and evangelists rendered at times in the congregations. These led a peripatetic ministry, and on their arrival at any village, they were received and got hospitality among the brethren, and took precedence of the local permanent ministers of the congregation. They were not to remain over a day or two. There was no remuneration, and they were to be content with what was set before them in the way of hospitality. If they asked for money, they were to be at once dismissed as false prophets, and this was one of the aids which the brethren of those original days had of "discerning the spirits," for at the time the infliction of false prophets and false apostles even, was no uncommon experience in the life of the primitive Church. There were no paid agents among the stated ministers; the president of the congregation, or the ruler of the synagogue, or the chairman of the elders, might be the chief potter of

the town, or a silversmith, or any artificer. Every man must be able to earn his bread in some honest calling.

Patristic testimony is against the lordly pre-eminence of Romish prelates. Ignatius, Polycarp and Clement represent the churches of their day as governed by a single bishop or pastor, with a presbytery of elders and deacons. "It was not lawful for the presbytery to do anything in the Church without the authority of the ruling or presiding presbyter, and the bishop or pastor could do nothing without the consent or counsel of his presbytery." Cyprian, who was latterly the chief innovator, states that bishops and presbyters governed the Church ("Cypriani Opera Epistle," v.), while Epiphanius does not hesitate to assert that presbyters are "successors of the Apostles" ("Epiphan Opera," Tom. 7; "Adversus Hæres," Lib. 1).

CHAPTER XV

THE PRESBYTERATE INSTITUTED

WE come now to the conclusion of our argument that Jesus Christ inspired His apostles to establish the government of His Church by a Presbyterate—including all the presbyters; that in that Presbyterate He embodied a complete government suitable for all places. In Titus i. 5 He gave instruction that this evangelist should remain in Crete for a time to complete the polity of the Church, by the ordination of elders. "I left thee in Crete that thou shouldest set in order (*ἐπιδιορθώσῃ*, to put in complete order) the things that are wanting (needed), and ordain elders in every city." The ordination of elders and the

establishment of the presbyterate completed the organisation of the Church. We have no record of any bishop being ordained as such, but always the ordination was of elders.

1. *Assumptions*.—Notwithstanding all the facts of history and the statements of the word of God, Canon Moberly, Professor at Oxford and a prominent member of the English Church Union, makes the assertion—"within the New Testament it is certain that the presbyterate was never complete or ultimate. Behind and above it there was always the background of Apostolate. It may be taken as equally certain that from the middle of the second century there is invariably found behind and above presbyterate the background of Episcopate" ("Ministerial Priesthood," p. 216). Professor Moberly finds it convenient to make astounding assertions without producing one word of evidence. Will he be good enough to point out one single instance of this Episcopate in the New Testament? Will he show the least trace of bishops as a distinct order in the New Testament, for there is none. Or can he indicate any intention on the Lord's part of an ultimate development of something higher than presbyters? He makes the assumption that these apostles, who were fresh from the presence of Jesus Christ and who had His spirit, left things "incomplete," which the innovators of the second century in their superior wisdom saw it necessary to change. Does it not strike the professor that this aspersion on the wisdom and capacity of the apostles is a detraction from the inspiration and ability of the men, with whom he and his party are anxious to connect all the supposed good things of his Apostolic succession? What was his apostolate

worth if it left things "incomplete?" The polity they adopted in their presbyterate had ample provision in it for application in every country under heaven, and for effective and entire government.

We have a sample in the assembly at Jerusalem (Acts xv.) of the provision made for the settlement of every question which might arise in the experience of the Church. We see there the principles, and these in active operation, and the power within the Church itself for self government. Does he not assert at least by implication that the inspired apostles of the Lord were a poor lot, when their work had to be supplemented and improved by succeeding fathers, by Cyprian, for instance, the ambitious lawyer of Carthage, and other self-seeking men? The great men of the Church were thus not the apostles but the men of the post-apostolic age.

Both Dr Lightfoot and Dr Moberly would have us believe that during the last thirty years of the first century, and consequently during the lifetime of the last surviving apostle, a great change came over the constitution of the Church, and that the Episcopal office became firmly established. Again assertions are made without one particle of proof. It is not questioned that a plurality of bishops existed in every congregation; but there is no functionary produced and guaranteed by Apostolic authority totally unlike these officers. Let it be perfectly understood that in the Apostolic and sub-Apostolic age several bishops were attached to every congregation with no power whatever beyond them, and with absolutely nothing in common with the modern bishop but the name. Why burden the Apostle John with any budding

Episcopacy in his closing years, when the whole drift of his ministry is against any supremacy. Instead of encouragement from John, as Lightfoot and Moberly assert, the tendency was sternly reproved by the apostle. In his third Epistle he significantly calls himself a presbyter, and denounces Diotrefes who aimed at the bishopric. There may have been a tendency towards concentrating the government of each local Church in a single official; but it is evident that this movement was dreaded and denounced by the apostle. There is no mention of the relative merits of the presbyterate; but that the elders giving their services voluntarily were more likely to be above mercenary considerations than the paid officials. So Peter also sees and protests against the evil. "The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder. . . . Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight not of constraint but willingly according unto God; nor yet for filthy lucre sake, but of a ready mind, neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you; but making yourselves examples to the flock" (1 Peter v. 1-3—*R.V.*). "Instead of seeking to establish the Episcopate, or even being willing to connive at its establishment, it is stoutly opposed by John and Peter, who dread the assumption of supreme power by the administrative official in any congregation" (Dods). A chairman or president in the college of the elders, like the Moderator of the Kirk-session in every Presbyterian Church, is easily understood, and indeed there is the record of the selection of a presbyter to preside at meeting of the presbyters in Alexandria with the name of bishop. *Primus inter pares*, as in Presbyterian communi-

ties, is familiar and necessary for the regular conduct of business. But supreme power by any one official is wholly unknown in the polity of the presbyterate established by the apostles.

2. *Alternatives*.—Dr Moberly (p. 217) formulates an alternative. “If Episcopacy is really in its origin evolved, not transmitted, then the orders which it confers and which depend on it are ultimately not transmitted but humanly devised. Then the entire belief of Christendom upon the essential character of Church ministry—which was true in fact in the New Testament and during the lifetime of the apostles—died to truth, when they died, and has been a fundamental falsehood ever since. Then the saintliest bishops and priests in Christian history, whatever they might be in personal endowment, differed not one jot from the good men, whom the last new sect has chosen to be its ministers.”

This inference is Moberly's, not ours; but he need not break his heart if he is told, that it is the candid belief of the half of Christendom who reject his fancied Apostolic Episcopate, and his apostolic succession, one of the greatest fictions ever invented, which has no existence in the Word of God, nor in the spiritual facts of Christian history for nineteen hundred years.

With regard to the dreadful alternative that his saintliest bishops and priests have not a jot more than the humblest elder of the newest sect, he ought to know that priests have no place in the New Testament Church, and are among the productions of later sacerdotalism, and the hauteur and intolerance of his saintly assumptions are no part of the genuine saintliness which the Holy Ghost

begets. The newest sect he disdains may have a better title to the term, if it is founded on the Word of God, and is under the administration of the Holy Spirit, and if the Holy Ghost is Christ's Vicar on earth for carrying on His work; this is what is to be expected, that the Lord will do according to His own pleasure, and not according to the hierarchies of this world. He ought to know that God has taken His own way to keep alive the real apostolic Christly succession in His own Church, the real evangelic Pentecostal continuity of His own children in life and activity, for nineteen hundred years. No matter what her bishops and her "priests" were — often the greatest scandals on the earth—God preserved His own Church alive, independent of Rome's proud claims, often poor enough since apostolic days; sometimes among the peasants of the Waldensian valleys, sometimes in the fair fields of the French huguenots, often on the shores of Britain, and among the glens and islands of Scotland.

Meantime we return to the fact, that Christ established a presbyterate by His inspired apostles, with provision in it to be a blessing to mankind, to exhibit to the end of time what God's intentions of mercy were. His Church was not to depend on the great things of this earth, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord." When that Presbyterate first appeared men could not mistake it, that the power was entirely from God, when the humble fishermen of Galilee were transformed into spiritual giants for changing gross sinners into the beautiful saints of the Lord.

It will be a startling revelation in the day when all secrets will be laid bare, if it will be found that the changes

which man's ambition devised, when prelacy became ascendant, split the Body of Christ, introduced a schism which has never been healed, and has blighted the heritage of God, which was designed to cure the world of evil, and has produced discord and desolation ever since. By this time, if the gospel had got justice it should have revolutionised the earth, and removed the curse of Adam's first transgression. Wherever schism has been it cannot be laid to the charge of Presbyterianism, which has done its utmost to move in the simple lines laid down by Christ and His apostles. It has preserved the original principles, and has striven to know nothing of man's motives or methods, but those laid down nineteen hundred years ago by Christ, the Church's head, and His inspired apostles.

CHAPTER XVI

THE CHURCH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT— ITS LEADING FEATURES

AT the close of an interesting course of lectures on the early Christian Church by the Rev. Principal T. Lindsay, D.D., Professor of Church History in the U.F. College of Glasgow, in connection with the Cunningham Lectureship in February 1902, the lecturer wound up his addresses with the words, "There is no one form of ecclesiastical government of Divine prescription, and that it belonged to the Church from age to age to modify and change. It was the Church which made the ministry, and not the ministry the Church." Men are free to have their opinions, but there was a time when a strong belief existed in Scot-

land in the scripturalness of Presbyterianism. It was then this lectureship was designed in Presbyterian interests established by Presbyterians, to expound the principles which the authors believed to be according to the Word of God, and in which they deemed there was a very steady attempt to keep close to the teaching of Scripture. It was established to commemorate the life and work of one of the brightest Presbyterians, Principal W. Cunningham, that Scotland ever had since Knox and Alex. Henderson. In several of the lectures there was a fair and successful effort to show that the life and customs well-known in Presbyterian Scotland, were very close reproductions of the simple types of the first century. It was felt, however, by many of his auditors, that the closing sentences were not the logical conclusion of his arguments. In a day when there are divergences and clear violations of Bible principles, his words did not indicate any clear outlook of any extent on matters of current history. As long as the lecturer adhered to the facts of Church history, his remarks were valuable and contained a great amount of useful research ; but when he enunciated his own opinions he entered a field where his hearers had to thread their way with caution, where loose statements were thrown out, which could only increase the flabby Presbyterianism current at the present time, even in Scotland.

It is very true that God does not prescribe in so many words any specific form of Church government, but it is also most true that God prescribed "the ordination of elders in every city," has also unfolded great doctrines of grace and inspired the twelve apostles to carry out His instructions, to reveal these to mankind. Throughout the

New Testament there are great principles laid down for the exposition of which He has given His children reason and common sense, and promised the aid of His Holy Spirit, and for proper unfolding and application of which they are responsible to God. There is undoubted Scripture precept, there is apostolic example, there is the precedent of primitive churches surely forming a system of Divine authority. The Church of the New Testament is described as possessing distinct features, and it is for us to consider where these are being most closely reproduced.

1. *The position of Members.*—If there is one thing insisted on in the word of God it is the priesthood of the real members of the Church of Christ, who are regenerated by the Holy Ghost. On this subject there is no dubiety, no doubt. Great though the privileges were of ancient Israel, a people in covenant with God, there was no access for them to God without a human mediator, the priest. But the followers of Christ are all priests. “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God” (1 Peter ii. 5), elsewhere called, “a royal priesthood,” “kings and priests.” “Through Christ we have access by one spirit unto the Father” (Eph. ii. 18). “Into the holiest place” (Heb. x. 19). These are far from being figures of speech, they are as real as every spiritual man knows as the light of the morning. Once a year the High Priest, alone, went into the most holy place of the Temple. Any day, or any hour of the day, the poorest, the youngest, has free access to God for any want and for relief in every burden, and access without any human mediator—none but Christ. We do not go empty-handed,

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for as real priests we are expected to carry our sacrifices with us. In Heb. xiii. 16 we are told what are acceptable sacrifices, "to do good and to communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." These are sacrifices as real as any in the old temple, but they are not sacrifices for the pardon of sin. After remission, the sacrifices are those of prayer and thanksgiving, living sacrifices of bodies consecrated, of joy and gladness, more pleasing to God than all the offerings of the temple, because they spring from intelligent hearts and purified consciences. Now this is a standing feature of the New Testament, and no change has ever been attempted, no change is possible here. God has removed this entirely out of man's reach, that to the end of time it should remain intact in the administration and government of His own kingdom. In the old economy, dear as the Jews were to God, only one individual of the nation had access to God, and that by blood. But the High Priest of the New Testament, of whom all others were types, went into heaven with his own blood, and changed the relations of the human family. That great fact received the best possible illustration when Christ established His Church on the simple lines of the New Testament, representing to the world the inner invisible relations of God to man, where all believers in Christ are embraced in a great, democratic brotherhood of regenerated men, all with the same blood-bought privileges, and having similar rights. There humble men are chosen, by Christ's commission to the Twelve to ordain men to minister to this great heritage of grace, requiring no human mediator but the ministry of word and doctrine, and Christ Himself the great Head and Mediator. They stand before

God, the Catholic Church, each led into this kingdom by the individual operation of the Holy Ghost, one by one, yet combined under the One head using the same spiritual speech, having one intent, the glory of the King, and showing that, in the outward polity they follow.

The Cunningham lecturer knows that there are churches in the present day which would reverse all this, and would fain deprive him and all his fellow-churchmen of these blood-bought privileges. They presume to take the place of divinely appointed men to change this administration. In their eyes he is only a layman with no ordination, nor entitled to perform any functions of a minister of the Gospel. They appoint other mediators for those whom God has made free, and ignore all the members of Christ's Church. They return "to the beggarly elements" of former bondage, appoint a priestly caste, and an "unbloody sacrifice" for the remission of sin, and over the dead body of Christ they return to the old system of service, and ignore the work of the Redeemer. They cannot be Christians who return to the old economy of the Jews. If they take up the old symbols, they are bound to fulfil all the obligations of the old Covenant. In face of retrogression so lamentable, notwithstanding the light, and joy, and freedom of the New Testament, and the great mediatorial work of Jesus Christ, the question becomes one of profound significance and importance. Is there any church in which the first great principle of the Church of the New Testament is recognised, and all the elements of its administration are in accordance therewith? We humbly declare that it was the duty of the lecturer to discover where the great scriptural verities are acknowledged and followed, and to point them

out before the world, instead of saying that there is no polity worthy of the name, "no ecclesiastical government of divine prescription," and thus throwing obloquy on those, to whom these great scriptural principles are of imperishable value. The priesthood of believers was early recognised and is valued above all things still, where the word of God has its proper place in the administration. The Church may "from age to age modify or change its position," yet "*it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's Word written*" (Art. xx.). But the clergy do not constitute the Church, neither must they change any thing without the sanction of the members of the Church. There might be a closer observance of this, and it would be for the Church's good.

2. *Prerogatives*.—Another feature of the New Testament Church is the scriptural prerogatives of its members. They have the right of union and organisation and of the popular election of all the officials. God called and prepared His servants; but the choice was left entirely to those who were to benefit by their ministrations. He might have kept all this in His own hands, and indicated by unmistakable signs who were to serve in His ministry. But He did not. He prescribed that there were to be apostles, prophets and evangelists to set up the New Testament Church for the latter times, and he prescribed pastors and teachers for the "perfecting of the saints." This He did prescribe with the various helps, gifts, miracles. But He left the choice of suitable agents to His people as His chosen method. When an apostle was to be selected to fill up the vacant place of Judas it was done by lot. They first selected two men and then gave forth their lots, when God guided the

lot to Matthias by the *Kleros*, "the lot" originating the word clergy, the root signifying popular election, and a word which in later days has fallen into abuse by the ignoring of popular rights altogether.

When the elders were appointed in every city, they were first chosen by the people after a show of hands, *χειροτονέω*; when deacons were appointed it was first by the choice of the people. The position of the members was fully recognised. There was no patronage, no favour allowed in God's house. Money could not purchase the right. The privileges of the New Testament Church belonged to all alike without distinction, and were clearly indicated. Was there no prescription there?

But are there not Churches in the present day in which this high privilege of the followers of Christ are wholly overridden, and the prerogatives of the royal priesthood trampled under foot? The rights of kings and governments are recognised in civil interests; but no king nor government can interfere in this Christian right, without tyrannical usurpation of an inalienable privilege. The people's prerogative may be thrown out in contempt and some other introduced to exercise the duty; but it can only be by a high-handed usurpation of a God-given right, always recognised and freely exercised. It is one of the first principles of the New Testament Church, prescribed and sanctioned by God. The deprivation of a Christian right, from the original owners cannot be done without sin, and there cannot be this, but by shameful tolerance of such usurpation, when those who are placed for the defence of the Church can look on in silence.

Does the Cunningham lecturer close his eyes to the

existence of this great prescriptive right, and the shameful violation of it, without a word of reproach? Are there not many in Scotland who fought for this Divine right, and who paid a great price in this land for the restoration of this privilege, when it was snatched away? After a great deal of trouble and labour, the Presbyterians are now in possession of this great heaven-given boon, and who count all the cost as nothing, compared to what is in their possession. And are there not hundreds of thousands in England deprived of this Divine prerogative, treated as aliens in their own parish churches, and as slaves where God had made them free men in Christ Jesus? They are deprived of the right to elect the simplest curate, forced to accept as gospel, the crude stammerings of upstart Anglo-Catholics, whose ambition is to show their independence, by trampling on Protestant rights and evangelical truths. A Christian laity, with their legitimate rights restored to them in the Church of England, would soon end the present scandals of lawless clerics, signing articles which they despise, and receiving every support in their irregularities by their rulers. The lecturer knows this, and ought to have the courage to state it, that God has prescribed forms and methods in His word, which some Churches ignore, and which others strive to copy, and as the consequence they have peace in all their borders, and the Divine blessing which giveth prosperity. The lecturer should have announced the fact that his Church possesses the approval of God.

3. *Work*.—Further, it is very clear from Scripture, as was shown that Christ established a simple Presbyterate in which humble men were to go forth in His name to

evangelise the world. He chose the humble and obscure that no flesh might glory in his sight, that it might be apparent to the world that it was "not by might nor by power, but by His spirit" this great work was to be accomplished. No one could make any mistake about that, as the humble fishermen of Galilee went forth to their work, and brought Jew and Gentile to Christ by the hundred thousand in every land. Fierce persecution could not hinder the marvellous work in which they were engaged. There was the amplest scope for the exercise of every gift and endowment which God gave them. But one thing was proscribed, the ambitious spirit. There was to be no room for self-seeking or self-aggrandisement. The request of the Mother of Zebedee's sons for supremacy was very soon suppressed by Christ Himself.

Had the Apostle Peter any authority to say to the elders, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof not by constraint but willingly, neither being lords over God's heritage; but examples of the flock?" Did God mean that human ambition was to be proscribed, that self-seeking after lordly honours was forbidden, and that greatness in His house was to be attained in striving after humility, and the union and consecration of all men's gifts for the benefit of God's flock, and being in this respect examples? Had not the Son of God divine reasons for turning the things of this world upside down, repressing human pride, and doing Himself the humblest menial service to show His meanings? How does all this accord with the proud aspirations of men who aim at the highest places, and who, notwithstanding all God's orders and restrictions, follow their own devices?

Should not the lecturer have unfolded principles which are written with sunbeams on the pages of the Word of God?

4. *Freedom*.—It is a fact that in respect of any recognition of the Christian rights of the laity in prelatie Churches, these are ignored. Even in free lands a tyranny is in force which is lamentable to contemplate. The clergy can have no intercourse with ministers of other Churches. The inferior clergy lead a life of repression, and are always in terror of masters, who show the intolerance of despots. The Episcopal lash is sounding in every corner of the land. The Bishop, instead of being the father of his clergy and his people, is often the jealous tyrant, repressing abler men than himself. No matter what a man's gifts may be from God—he may be possessor of the ten talents, or the five, or the one—it altogether depends on the will of a spiritual master, if his gifts can even be let out to usury, or ever known or heard of. It does not do for a Bishop's deficiencies to be apparent in the presence of his inferiors. No one could deny that deluded Newman was a talented man. No one can tell how his disappointments in the Church of England fostered the idea of greater room, possibly greater recognition, elsewhere. He would also have better authority, he imagined, to guide him for “the glory of God” and the “good of the Church,” and he could bring his talents back to God doubled. That was his expectation in what he thought was the true Prelatic Church. Here is his discovery in his own words in a pitiful letter to Father Whitty, S.J., his great friend:—

“THE ORATORY, BIRMINGHAM, 19th March 1865.

“MY DEAR FATHER WHITTY,—I thank you very much for your most kind letter; and thank you heartily for your prayers, which I

value very much. It is very kind in you to be anxious about me ; but, thank God, you have no need. Of course it is a constant source of sadness to me that I have done so little for Him during a long twenty years ; but then I think, and with some comfort, that I have ever tried to act as *others* told me, and if I have not done more it is because I have not been put to do more, or have been stopped when I attempted more.

“The Cardinal brought me from Littlemore to Oscott ; he sent me to Rome ; he stationed and left me in Birmingham. When the Holy Father wished me to begin the Dublin Catholic University, I did so at once. When the Synod of Oscott gave me to do the new translation of Scripture, I began it without a word. When the Cardinal asked me to interfere in the matter of the *Rambler*, I took on myself, to my sore disgust, a great trouble and trial. Lastly, when my Bishop, *proprio motu*, asked me to undertake the mission of Oxford, I at once committed myself to a very expensive purchase of land and began, as he wished me, to collect money for a church. In all these matters I think (in spite of many incidental mistakes), I should, on the whole, have done a work, had I been allowed or aided to go on with them ; but it has been God’s Blessed Will that I should have been stopped.

“If I could get out of my mind the notion, that I *could* do something and am *not* doing it, nothing could be happier, more peaceful, or more to my taste, than the life I lead.

“Though I have left the notice of the Catechism to the end of the letter, be sure I value it in itself and as coming from you. The Pope will be very glad to hear the author of it.—Ever yours affectionately,

(Signed) “JOHN H. NEWMAN.”

“The Rev. Father Whitty.”

—Purcell’s “Life of Manning,” vol. ii. p. 500.

The letter of this talented man sounds like the whine of a galley slave, conscious of singular powers ; but on every hand repressed by inferior and jealous men, and the pre-latic Church of England is filled with similar lamentation. It is not too heavy to say it is the Church of slaves, the land of repression, where there is room only for what may be mediocre because the Divine order is reversed. “One is your Master, all ye are brethren,” was Christ’s prescription,

but it is carried out as if Christ had said, "Ye are all slaves to carry out the will and forward the purposes of the Lord your bishop." Christ's words and intentions are complete; but man has reversed them in prelatic Churches. This leads to erroneous views of the Church, as if it existed wholly for the clergy, and the body of Christ did not require any thought whatever. The Church of Christ, which is really nothing but the Man of Sorrows Himself reproduced in all His followers, is wholly ignored. Can this system of repression be from God with all its limitations and narrowness? In Presbyterianism, the lecturer's religion, there is absolute freedom for the use of the ten talents in a man's possession, or as many as he has. No repression but the aid of the Holy Ghost to make the most of every one of them that they may be doubled. The lecturer ought surely to say where the freedom of God is found, and that Christ had prescribed liberty under the presbyterate.

CHAPTER XVII

BIBLE RULE OF CONDUCT

IN the New Testament Church the prominent place was given to Scripture. It was the sole rule of conduct—the universal Statute Book. The Old Testament canon was completed, and was guarded rigorously by the Jews, and the Christian Church received it from them, and the New Testament canon was completed in early days. The Church accepted the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists soon, and well it might, for the mark of God's inspiration was

very obvious. Thus Peter speaks of Paul's writings as Scriptures (2 Peter iii. 16). The Epistle of Barnabas quotes Matthew's gospel with the formula, "It is written." Justin Martyr, in the second century, speaks of the gospels (which he calls Memoirs) as used in the Churches. No guide so safe, for none is infallible but God's Word. The King of Kings alone binds the conscience with His words. This Statute Book claims inspiration. "All Scripture given by inspiration is profitable." It needs little discernment to recognise the matchless excellence of the Word of God compared with other writings. They sink into insignificance when brought into comparison with the Scriptures.

1. *The Bible claims perfection.*—"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." "All Scripture is profitable." "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished." "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

2. *It claims authority.*—"If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." And it possesses that secret power when used by the Holy Ghost, which makes the proudest bend low before God. The Church is to be heard, rulers obeyed, things set in order; but all according to this Word. Even Apostles, in witnessing, said, "None other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come" (Acts xxvi. 22).

3. *It claims obedience.*—"To obey is better than sacrifice." The words of Christ bind each conscience and no other can. There can be no following of Christ except through obedience.

It is not by any means so difficult a task to distinguish what is inspired, from the writings of uninspired men. The fathers of the Reformed Church gave expression in the Westminster Confession, to what all spiritual men of any discernment come very readily to discover. "The authority of Holy Scripture, dependeth not on the testimony of man. God Himself who is its author is felt in every corner of it. When we pass from the fathers we are at once confronted with the excellency of the matter of Scripture, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellences and the entire perfection thereof are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God" (Westminster Confession). The inward work of the Holy Spirit marks it out as the Book of Books, and bears testimony in the human heart that the Word is from God. The founders of the Reformed Church of England embodied some weighty words on the authority of Scripture in Article XX. "The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies and authority in Controversaries of Faith: and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ, yet as it ought not to decree anything against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of Salvation."

4. *Clement's and Gore's Twisting of Scripture.*—The

authority of Scripture has always been acknowledged in the Church of Christ. So much has this been felt that there have been cases where, if no Scripture could be found to substantiate important steps, passages have been fabricated for that object. One of the most startling is that which occurs with Canon Gore's connivance. He is now Bishop of Worcester. For twenty years he was a leading light in the "English Church Union," "Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament," besides editor of *Lux Mundi*.

He is anxious to have the support of Scripture for his very strong bias to prelacy, and in "The Church and the Ministry," p. 316, he quotes a remarkable statement, from Clement of Rome, of what professes to be a quotation from the Bible in Isaiah lx. 17. The words refer to Israel's glory after her affliction for sin, in the return of the favour of God. The entire verse is as follows: "For brass I will bring gold, for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stone iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness" (A.V.). This is a fairly good translation of the original Hebrew. Officers or governors, and exactors of tribute, are the two nouns of the quotation, the civil rulers of the Jews. The meaning is very obvious. All things will be changed for the better in the happy age to come. All rulers and tribute collectors in the restored Jerusalem will not only be peaceable and righteous, but shall be peace and righteousness itself. The reference is clearly to the secular rulers of Israel. But Clement has twisted all this into an ingenious translation of the Septuagint to suit his own leanings. Our readers will understand it better by a minute comparison of the following lines:

Hebrew (R.V.) "I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness."

יְשַׁמְתִּי פַקְדֹתָי שְׁלוֹם וְנִגְשֵׁיךָ צְדָקָה :

Septuagint, "I will give thy rulers in peace, and thy overseers in righteousness."

καὶ δώσω τοὺς ἄρχοντας σου ἐν εἰρήνῃ, καὶ τοὺς ἐπισκόπους σου ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ.

Clement, "I will appoint their bishops in righteousness, and their deacons in faith."

There is first the revised version with the Hebrew underneath, then the Septuagint and its translation, then Clement's twisted version. But the first thing in Clement's translation (for he uses the Greek) is an ingenious transposing of the clauses, then secondly a change of the word *ἄρχων*, a ruler, into *διακονος*, a servant or minister, and by the introduction of prepositions he changes the entire meaning of the passage. This is not the Word of God, nor has he preserved the signification, and he has simply produced a transformation of Scripture to substantiate a predilection of his own. This is the work of a Father of the Ancient Church, and Bishop Gore of the Prelatic Church uses it and introduces the quotation with the words, "For thus says Scripture." It has to be noticed that he quotes for "Scripture" what is not Scripture. Such handling of the Word of God is said to be common in the Talmud; but the twisting of the Bible to gain an object, and to impose on unsuspecting people is unpardonable in a Christian. The offence of Clement is very great, all the more so that it was done for changing the polity of the Church, and in an age when

a quotation, purporting to be from the Word of God, would have been of immense service for the object intended. If the use of Clement's words took place from carelessness in not examining his references, it is to be regretted. But if it was done with the full consciousness of the inaccuracy for the purpose of quoting Isaiah as favourable to his prelacy, and in predicting it, it is altogether inexcusable. The cause must be a poor one for which a fabrication from Scripture has to be found by Bishop Gore.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE FATHERS

MUCH is made in certain quarters of the fathers of the sub-apostolic age, and without the least desire or intention to detract from the character or from the work which good men have done, we must not give place to the undue veneration which is accorded to them by making them equal to the Apostles; and in many cases accepting their words or precepts, as of more importance than the utterances of the inspired Twelve. An authority is accorded to them, in the traditions which they gathered, which would make them and their services a second rule of faith to compete with Scripture. A very slight acquaintance, however, with the men and the writings they have left behind, convinces any who cares to examine them, that they are men of very mediocre attainments, abounding in superstitions and absurdities, and are not to be placed for a moment in juxta-position with the Apostles, as men of

extraordinary judgment or capacity. Indeed it is a source of wonder that any one should refer to the fathers as of any importance. Here and there a good expression may be picked up in their writings, or a remark which may throw some light on Scripture; but generally one wanders through vast regions of puerilities or nonsense. Men may adopt theories of inspiration, and fight about their verbal inspiration or plenary-verbal inspiration or any name they please; but they have only to take up Matthew's Gospel for instance, or Paul's Epistle to the Romans or Ephesians, and compare these with the best of the fathers. The difference is astounding. In the former we cannot go a step without feeling that God is here, imparting dignity, vastness, magnificence of thought, which no human genius ever reached. Things are stated, which none but God knew, and which, but for His revealing, would have remained hidden from mankind for ever. The fathers may have their deductions which are at times fairly good; but very often they are only trifling with the living Word of God. A thousand reasons exist why men will say from the deepest convictions, "The Bible and the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants," and not only so, but for mankind.

1. *Entitled Saints*.—They are ushered before us as "saint" this and "saint" that, but we fail to see wherein lies the claim for sanctity, except that it was the ministerial custom of remote ages, so to designate good men. The fashion at present is to speak of ministers as reverend, or very reverend, or right reverend, or most reverend; but everyone notes these are attached for convenience to an office—no one of judgment puts any stress on that. The assumption of anything else might indicate more pride

than what common custom allows. But when death comes and strips men of all earthly connections, Norman M'Leod, John Cairns, Thomas Chalmers, stand out in all the strength of their characters without any accidental adjunct. A Scottish minister suggested that if Ignatius, or Irenæus, or Cyprian were designated Mr Ignatius of Antioch, Mr Irenæus of Lyons, or Mr Cyprian of Carthage, it would show better the value to be attached to each. Some of the fathers were no doubt martyrs ; but most men would regard it a desecration to speak of Saint John Brown of Priesthill, or Saint James Renwick, or Saint Latimer, or Saint Ridley, or Saint Patrick Hamilton. In true Presbyterian fashion it would be more agreeable to Scripture to speak of Peter, Paul, Polycarp, Savonarola. Nothing would be more grotesque than to say St Martin Luther, or St John Knox, or St George Wishart, though in point of saintly character and work, they deserve the designation as much as the best of them all, but the fashion has changed.

2. *Samples of Writings.*—It is time the men should speak for themselves and let the world judge by a few quotations gathered at random, between men inspired and those who can lay no claim to a vestige of the special inspiration of God. Take for instance Barnabas, the companion of Paul in his apostolic missions. Commenting on Numbers xix., he says that “the three young men who were to sprinkle the ashes of the red heifer denoted Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they were great before the Lord,” and that “the wool was put upon the wood because the Kingdom of Jesus was to be founded upon wood or upon the Cross.” *Clerici Patres*, vol. i. p. 25. ‘The precept thou shalt not eat of the hyena, signifies thou

shall not be an adulterer, *because that animal every year changes its sex*, and is sometimes male, sometimes female." Some quotations are too offensive to any delicate mind to be repeated from this father.

Justin Martyr again discussing the words, Gen. xlix. 11, "He washed his garments in wine and his clothes in the blood of grapes," says, "it is a prediction respecting the death of Christ," and he finds out a reason for the form of the cross on which he was appointed to suffer, "in the sails of ships, in the plough, in the shape of our bodies, and in the horn of the unicorn" (*Dialog. cum Trypho*, p. 40; *Second Apol.*, p. 38; *Dial.* p. 70).

Take Irenæus, who says that the name Jesus, in Hebrew, is of two letters *and a half*, and signifies *the heavens*; "that the two pence or denarii which were left by the good Samaritan with the host, who was to take care of the man who fell among thieves, were the image and superscription of the Father and the Son;" and that "the unclean animals which did not divide the hoof were those which were destitute of faith, and who did not meditate on the oracles of God" (Lib. ii. cap. 41; *De Haer*; Lib. iii. cap. 19; Lib. v. cap. 8).

Take Clemens Alexandrinus, who informs us that "the conduct of the Saviour is always straight and agreeable to his nature, as is intimated by the letter *Iota* in the name Jesus;" that in these words in the first Psalm, "He shall be as a tree planted by the rivers of water which yieldeth its fruits in its season, and whose leaf shall not fail," there is "a reference to the resurrection"; that "the feet of Christ which the woman anointed (Luke vii.) denoted His divine doctrine, which travelled to the uttermost corner of the

earth with distinguished glory;" and that "marriage is proper," because when our Lord says in Matt. xviii. that where two or three meet in His name, He will be in the midst of them, "it means a man, his wife, and his child, *andra kai gunaika kai teknon*" (*Pædag*, lib. i. cap. 9, p. 93, 94; *ibid.*, lib. i. cap. 10, p. 96; *ibid.*, lib. ii. cap. 8, p. 129; *Stromata*, lib. iii., p. 331).

Take Tertullian, who says that "the mark which Ezekiel was to put on the foreheads of the men who sighed and cried in the midst of Jerusalem was the letter Tau or the sign of the cross;" "that the reason why the Israelites overcame the Amalekites was because Moses lifted up his hands in the form of a cross, and they were commanded by one whose name was Jesus or Joshua."

Origen maintained that "the servants of Isaac, who contended with the Philistines were Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John;" and Cyprian, one of the most noted, maintained that "the Redeemer is *God's hand* from the words in Isaiah lix. 1-4, "Is God's hand weak that it cannot save?" That the Jews would fasten Him to the cross from these passages: "I have spread out my hands all day long to a rebellious people," Isaiah lxxv. 2; "Thy life shall hang in doubt before thine eyes, and thou shalt fear day and night and shalt have no assurance of thy life," Deut. xxviii. 66.

Jerome, can. 3, in Matt. vi. 26 maintains very gravely "that by the fowls of the air, who neither reap nor gather into barns, we are to understand the devils, and by the lilies of the field, which neither toil nor spin, are meant the angels."

Justin Martyr believed very firmly in the millennium as it was taught by Papias, and as it is reported by Irenæus,

doctrines very different from that of the Apostles. "The days," said he, "will come in which there shall grow vineyards, having each 10,000 stocks, and each stock 10,000 branches, and each branch 10,000 shoots, each shoot 10,000 bunches, each bunch 10,000 grapes, and each grape squeezed shall yield twenty-five measures of wine; and when any of the saints shall go to pluck a bunch, another bunch will cry out, I am a better, take me, and bless the Lord through me. In like manner a grain of wheat sown shall bear 10,000 stalks, each stalk 10,000 grains, and each grain 10,000 lbs. of the finest flour; and so all other fruits, seeds, and herbs in the same proportion." "These words Papias, a disciple of John and a companion of Polycarp, an ancient man, testifies in writing in his fourth book, and adds they are credible to those who believe."

3. *The Church Rebuilders!*—This exhibition of the fathers will settle a number of questions. Are these the men, we ask, to change the system appointed by Apostles? Are these competent hands for the reconstruction of the Divine purpose in the polity of the Church? Ignatius and Polycarp were ordained, it is said, by the Apostles. If so, they could only be ordained as Presbyters; but it is clear that this did not make them very competent to deal with the interpretation of Scripture. Clement was a fellow-labourer with the Apostles. He, too, must have been a Presbyter; but that did not preserve him from error. As a matter of fact, during the life of Paul the mystery of iniquity had already begun to work. Chrysostom favoured Pelagius, Bernard was smitten with Monkeny. Cyprian and the whole council of Carthage erred about baptism. The less that is said about the fathers the better. We may

thank God more than ever that He has preserved to us the Scriptures, and left us not to fathers who were weak, erring men, or ambitious of honour, who by their interference with the Presbyterate established by the Apostles, marred the beautiful purpose of the Lord—one Church, one flock, and one Shepherd. What authority had they to introduce changes where the Divine wisdom had produced a system to suit mankind, and had made provision for all the requirements of His Church? Newman and Pusey, and the writers of the "Tracts for the Times," and the originators of the Anglo-Catholic movement, follow these fathers, who, by their puerilities and absurdities, imposed on the men of the second and third centuries. The changes they introduced centuries ago ended in the evolution of the Pope of Rome, and the splitting up into sections the Church of Jesus Christ. The great schism began when men commenced to improve on the system which was fully instituted by the Lord, and to impose their innovations on the Divine plan. This grew amazingly with advancing ages, when the practices of the pagan world were ingrafted on God's simple methods, when the preaching of the Word as the grand means of the regeneration of the world was set aside for imposing ceremonies, devoid of grace or the power of the Holy Ghost. It has surely reached its culmination in the arrogance of the men, who claim to be the true representatives of the Apostolic institution, and unchurch all who reject their claims. The real successors of the Apostles are on this earth fulfilling the great trust enjoined on them, as Paul left it in his day. The greatest schismatics of the world are among those who have departed from Apostolic doctrine and practice, as deposited in the Presbyterate, and

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accepted pagan habits instead. The sooner this fact is proclaimed boldly over the earth the better, for the exposure of those who have no higher credentials than their own assumptions.

CHAPTER XIX

THE UNANIMOUS CONSENT OF THE FATHERS

To take Rome's estimate of herself, it might be thought that this Church was the most generous of earthly institutions. One would imagine that, in the most considerate way, she had not only made provision for men coming into immediate contact with God in His own Word, but had taken care that men should have the amplest security, in the aids provided for understanding the Scripture. It might be thought that Divine instruction was guarded in the infallible teaching of holy mother Church, in accepting nothing without the unanimous consent of the fathers. A great deal was made of this at the Council of Trent. We have shown, however, that implicit confidence cannot be placed in the fathers. It may serve a purpose to speak of them with great veneration, among men who are ignorant of the puerilities, and of the frivolities which they left to the world. One thing, however, is certain, that they did not write by the aid of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of God could never have been the author of the thousands of absurd things we meet with in their writings—scientific fictions, physiological follies, too frivolous for children. We are in a better position than they were to know the mind of God. We have the Scriptures, which bear the

stamp of God on every page, and the Spirit of God to aid us to understand them. It may look like Protestant prejudice to say that the unanimous consent of the fathers is a matter which never had any existence. It is certain there is not one doctrine of Scripture about which they are agreed.

Kenrick's Denial.—The evidence which we produce for this assertion is not Protestant but Roman Catholic. At the time of the Œcumenical Council in Rome in 1870, there was one man there who had the courage of his convictions, and never consented to the new dogma of the Papal Infallibility. It was Archbishop Kenrick, of the U.S.A., only a few years deceased. He prepared a paper for the Vatican Council, which, for very obvious reasons, he was not allowed to read; but, happily for the world, it was published in Naples. In this production he declared that the Roman Catholic Church had no power to make the pope personally infallible, because the creed of Pius IV. expressly declared that the Church cannot decree any doctrine to be of Faith, unless the Scripture on which it is founded is interpreted according to the *unanimous* consent of the fathers.

He says there are five different interpretations given by the fathers of the words "I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter (Petros), and upon this rock (*Petra*) I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi. 18). Seventeen fathers, whose names he gives, teach that Peter is the Rock on which the Church is built. Forty-four, a large majority, say that Peter's faith is the Rock, *i.e.* his confession of Christ's Divinity; and a third opinion is that the Church was built on all the

Apostles, and is held by eight fathers. A fourth is that Christ is the foundation, held by sixteen; and a fifth is that the Rock is the faithful who believed Christ to be the Son of God. The archbishop concludes his argument by saying that if we are bound (as the Roman Catholic Church teaches in the creeds of Pius IV.), to follow the fathers, then we must hold for certain that the word *Petra* means the faith professed by Peter.

Chrysostom, *Hom.* 34, says: "The Son of God is the Rock from which Peter derives his name, and on which He said that He would build His Church."

Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, best known of all the fathers, has written plainly and fully that the Church was founded, not upon the stone, which thou (Peter) art, but upon the Rock which thou hast confessed."

Such is the unanimous consent of the fathers of which Rome professes to make a great deal. This consent does not exist on any one point even on the text which they declare supports the supremacy of Peter. Instead of any aid to scripture, the man who relies on it leans on a shadow. The greatly lauded fathers had their opinions, very often they were fanciful, and very often frivolous. But more than all, Rome very often contradicts herself. "There is a collect, said at mass for the vigil of St Peter and St Paul, in which the following prayer occurs, which every priest must use on that particular day:—'Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that thou wouldest not suffer us, whom thou hast established on the Rock of the *Apostolic confession*, to be shaken by any disturbances.' This proves very clearly that at the remote time when this collect was first written, Rome believed and taught the true interpreta-

tion of the text, that the Church was established on the Rock of Peter's confession, and not on Peter as an individual." Like a valuable fossil laid bare by some passing stream, under the rubbish of doctrine, accumulated through ages, here is the old doctrine in the "original belief of the Roman Catholic Church, asserted in the most solemn moments of the mass. Yet in her catechism, in her pulpits, the new doctrine is taught and enforced under the pain of eternal damnation to unbelievers. With such inconsistencies and glaring contradictions, the Church of Rome has the audacity to claim the confidence of men" (Cusack).

CHAPTER XX

ABSOLUTION

MATT. xvi. 15-23. "He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter (*Petros*, a stone), and upon this rock (*Petra*, rock) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven . . . From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things

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of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him saying, Be it far from thee, Lord : this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan : thou art an offence : for thou savourest not the things that be of God but those that be of men."

Matt. xviii. 18. "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

John xx. 19-24. "Then the same day at even being the first day of the week when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you : as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost : Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came."

Three times over the same commission is given in these words ; first to Peter on his noble confession, then to the Apostles, and last of all to the whole of the disciples, the universal Church of Christ as it then existed. More important words it could not be well conceived for the benefit of mankind. Wonderful as the power was which was conferred on Peter, there was no personal gift which

did not belong to the rest of the Apostles, and although the honour was great in giving Peter the first assurance of this authority, there is no indication of any supremacy for him among his brethren or in the Church, for his confession must ever be read with his impetuous rebuke to Christ, which drew on him the severe condemnation, "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." If it was imagined that this gift was to be the exclusive prerogative of Peter, later on it was more fully explained to the rest of the Apostles that there was nothing peculiar to Peter in it, but that it belonged to them all. If it was thought that there was to be a special caste in the Church of Christ, with peculiar spiritual power of opening heaven or closing it, of pardoning sin or retaining it, the Lord Himself took means to make His intentions plainer, that through coming ages men would not make mistakes about the authority He conveyed to His people. After His resurrection, His disciples were together with two exceptions — Judas the betrayer, and Thomas called Didymus. Those who were present and who were breathed on were the "disciples," not exclusively Peter, and not even the Apostles, but all who followed Him, and who are always known as the disciples in the narrative of the life of the Saviour. There were more there, than the closer followers of the Lord. Neither were they exclusively men, for we always read of the women who waited on His ministry, as forming a portion of the disciples. The upholders of sacerdotalism will find here, very much more than they desire, in the construction of a sacerdotal caste. It cannot be denied that the women, who were such

constant followers of Christ's ministry, were among those on whom Christ breathed. If the passage and the commission meant the forgiveness of sins as we regard the word, Mary Magdalene had as much right to pardon sins as Peter had. Whatever is intended in these words, they are by Divine right the heritage of the Church—male and female, rich and poor—to the end of time. We do not read of a repetition of the acts or the words, for the special endowment of this gift on the absent Thomas. It was the final bestowal of a spiritual power of authority, to a Church on Presbyterian lines, and this will account for the stubbornness with which the possession was maintained through the ages, in resisting all encroachments for the establishment of a sacerdotal court for hearing confessions, granting absolution, and the foisting on the Church of a huge system of imposture, during the Middle Ages. There is much in the New Testament about confession of sin to God; there is nothing told us about confessing sins to man. There is the solitary admonition to those who err: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another" (James v. 16). That does not mean that sins against God are to be confessed to a man for absolution. The minister or the priest who offends his brother, is as much bound to confess his error, as the member of the Church is bound to do so to the individual he has offended. So will the peace and friendship of the Church be healed, and the concord of the spiritual body of Christ be preserved. In this passage it is the sins which were public offences of the community which are meant. Sins against God were treated in another way (1 John i. 9). It never suited sacerdotalists to mark out the difference.

Priestly Absolution Unknown.—In the Epistles to the Corinthians we have a sample of the discipline of the Church in the primitive times, and the manner in which Paul allied himself to the Church in dealing with an offence. It is an accurate account of what went on for ages in dealing with offenders. Those who transgressed were cut off from the fellowship of the Church. The offence was owned publicly, and readmission and restoration to membership was the act of the religious community, and if the officers of the Church superintended, whatever part they took it was done ministerially, and not as independent authorities. In former ages this was the feature of the treatment of offenders. "Transgressors were common then as now, but absolution according to present theories was unknown. There was no sacrament of penance. Penitents came to be divided into four classes. First were the Weepers, or candidates for penance, who stood at the church door weeping and begging the congregation that they might enter, on a course of penitential discipline. If their petitions were granted, the Weepers confessed their sin loudly and publicly to the whole congregation. They were then admitted to the second class of penitents, the Hearers, who were granted leave to hear the reading of Scripture and the sermon, but were excluded from the prayers. After a course of this treatment, the Hearers were promoted into the third class of Kneelers, and were allowed to advance farther into the church, and to kneel there while supplication was made for them. The fourth and last class were the Bystanders, or as we might say the Witnesses. These penitents were non-communicating witnesses of the Lord's Supper, and when these classes

had been gone through, the offender was readmitted to communion. That is, he received once more the peace and the privileges of the society. He was forgiven by the congregation for the injury and scandal he had occasioned. . . . When the whole course was ended and the penitent was forgiven, there was no form of absolution used which could imply that God's forgiveness against Himself had been conveyed; and still less that it was conveyed by the clergy or by the individual priest. The forgiveness of the congregation was conveyed for an offence against itself. It was conveyed through prayers with an imposition of hands" (Galton). That was performed by the presiding Presbyter, with consent of the other Presbyters and the Deacons; but that conferred no sacramental grace. That was the entire theory and practice of early confession for several centuries. Private confession was entirely excluded, and absolution was a thing unknown. When Christianity became established as the religion of the State, then confession as discipline became enforced by civil statute. But the modern confession and absolution were ignored for centuries, having no more place in practice than in the Word of God.

In the fifth century Leo I. (440-461) writing to the Bishops of Campania, first mooted a change and gave directions, which led to the introduction of the modern ideas of private confession and absolution. He referred to the inconvenience and danger of open confession, and went on to say, "It is enough if the guilt of the conscience be laid open to the presbyters alone in secret confessions." A long time elapsed, for the change developed slowly, and to provide for the changing circumstances, penitentials or

books of instructions for penitential discipline were drawn up; but as late as the twelfth century the present theory of sacramental confession was still unknown in the Church. In the year 1215, however, Innocent III. summoned the fourth Lateran Council and took the initiative, in formulating various great changes in the belief of the Catholic world. It was then that transubstantiation became the creed of the fast evolving belief of Rome. The hearing of the Mass on Sundays and holidays was made compulsory, under pain of mortal sin. The gross ignorance and darkness of the period only made this vital change possible, and the low state of religious life in the churches of the West, enabled the Pope to complete the dream of many an ambitious pontiff, to complete the pretensions of the sacerdotal hierarchy, that they and they alone were entrusted with that mysterious power over the destiny of the human family. By the misreading of John xx. 23, confession to a priest was enforced, and instead of the voice of God in the heart whispering forgiveness, the "Absolvo te," "I absolve thee," of a man, became the dominating words of Rome's assumption, to occupy the place of Jesus Christ among the nations, and the sin-burdened of mankind.

CHAPTER XXI

THE GATES OF HELL

MUCH time and labour have been bestowed on this passage, and without a doubt the rich promise couched in the simple words is worth it all, for it is one of the greatest in the Bible bearing on the security and permanency of the Church. It would simplify the matter, if it should always

be remembered that the words are independent of Peter. Though they were first addressed to the Apostle, he would be a poor refuge for the Church when days of evil came. He was no doubt a warm-hearted loving man ; but his forwardness brought him into trouble. On one occasion he was called "Satan," for he savoured not the things which were of God, but those that were of men. On another occasion Christ told him Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee (Luke xxii. 31-32.) He would be a poor refuge for the Church, and yet never a man sat on his reputed chair who was half so good as Peter. Neither he nor any of his successors, could give security to the Church. Neither was it for any power Christ reposed in the Church itself. Liable to go wrong, with Satan pledged to destroy it, the winds of error sweeping through and almost destroying every vestige of it, it stood in need of a stronger refuge than any that man could ever yield. It is neither to Peter, nor to any earthly power, neither to the State nor to the people, neither in cathedra nor ex-cathedra, nor to the best earthly institution, will Christ trust the keeping of his Church, for the dangers are greater than the heart of man ever yet conceived.

To get at the meaning we have to take into account a little of the peculiarities of oriental life. At the gates of the cities in the East, the people met to spend their leisure hours. Markets were held there, and citizens met there, for the shortest way to get the news. There magistrates sat to conduct courts of justice. Lot sat at the gate of Sodom to administer judgment, and so the sitting at the gates of the city meant leisure, or business, or justice, or the prin-

cial affairs and tidings of a city's life. The gates of Hell mean the chief counsels, as well as counsellors of darkness ; every black intrigue as well as those who hatch the mischief, with every vile intention of destruction,—all the cruel persecutions ever invented to destroy the Church of Christ ; all the fantastic, comic, dismal emblems of power to turn the Church into contempt, and all the uncouth and hideous symbols of power and bigotry ;—the inquisition, the gibbet, the wheel, the rack, the stake, all the instruments of cruelty and wrong, to destroy the pure, meek religion of Christ ; all the instruments of corruption, human hatred, set in motion by Satan and the spirits as bad as himself ; all are included in the words *the* Gates of Hell, and though none knew their fierceness better than Christ, He takes them all in the sweep of this divine promise, the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. When the long dark train of Satan's plots and cruelties and intentions are taken into account, it is the miracle of miracles, that there is a Church on the earth, and that the Church of Christ is still in existence, and that it prospers every day. Great and mighty though the gates of Hell are, greater and mightier far are the resources of the Lord Jesus Christ, in keeping the power of Satan in check. He overrules the darkest intentions of the wicked one, so that the evil meant never comes, but a greater blessing instead. "We know," said Paul, who knew what he was writing about, "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. viii. 28). The gracious promise of Christ has been fulfilling continually in the preservation and the permanency of the Church.

CHAPTER XXII

THE KEYS

"I WILL give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

Keys are for opening or closing the door. The keys of the house belong to the legal occupants, to admit the members of the family or to close the door against those who are unwelcome, and have no right to enter. No material keys accompanied the Lord's words, but all that the keys indicated were conveyed to Peter on his courageous confession of the Divinity of his Master. On the evening after His resurrection, in the most solemn circumstances it was conveyed to the Church, and to those to be associated with Peter in the administration of the Spiritual Kingdom, which Christ was now to establish. The Pope proudly wears the figure of the keys as the symbol of his authority. But it must be remembered that there was no personal preference in the promise. It was the emblem of authority to those whom Christ brought into the house, and to whom he gave charge of the house, and all things within. If there is any change in the conditions, anything introduced into the legal title, anything which Christ has not sanctioned, or anything tolerated therein to Christ's prejudice, the symbol is no longer the badge of legal authority, but of assumption. It is a lawless arrogant seizure of power, which Christ resists in his secret administration of His kingdom. Unless lawfully got and lawfully worn, it is an illegal seizure and the emblem becomes instead that of usurpation, and the mark of a usurper.

The kingdom of heaven of which Jesus spoke was His Church, His own house; and on the evening after His resurrection the keeping of the keys was given to the inmates of the house. "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John xx. 23). The keys are given to the whole family, not to Peter alone, nor to the apostles alone; but to the whole inmates of the house, and to those who might be deputed by them to use them. Thus the right of admitting into the company of the community was given to those who embraced the Lord's own spiritual offer of forgiveness, and the shutting out was to be of those whose own unbelief would prefer the remaining outside.

The keys are thus the symbol of the authority of admission into the house, or of exclusion of those who were once in, but gave reason to fear that they were unworthy of retaining their place; and of readmission of those who by repentance gave evidence of a genuine change of heart. This power every association must have for its own protection, and while too rigorous an administration might lead to great hardship, in the grieving of those whom the spirit of God had not grieved, there can be no doubt that lax discipline would lead to the injury of the cause of Christ, and much injury to those who imagined, that the Church is to be administered by human caprice or partiality. There are thus these three things to be understood by the keys, authority of admission into the Church to those who are taught by Christ's spirit, expulsion of those who show an entirely worldly spirit, and the readmission into the kingdom of those who by sincere re-

penitance give evidence of a change of heart. These three things exhaust the power of the keys, and these three functions embrace the meaning of the commission of Christ to His disciples in John xx. 23.

Complete Government in the Church.

There is the admission into His house by conversion, there is excommunication through conduct unworthy of the profession, and there is the readmission to the Church through repentance. These have nothing to do with the private confession and priestly absolution introduced into the Church by Innocent III. in 1215. This has no place in Christ's Church and never had. The confession of sins against God to man, and the absolution of man instead of God, was never practised in the Church. It was an entirely human invention for the aggrandisement of a sacerdotal class. The confession of sins against God must be to God, and the forgiveness following such a confession, must be from God and God alone. Anything else is not worth the name. But the power of the keys was early acknowledged and put into force from the earliest times. We have the record of its use in the admission of thousands into the Church on their conversion, and the administration of baptisms in token thereof.

We have the exercise of exclusion from the Church for immorality in 1 Cor. v., for heresy in 1 Tim. i. 20. By it the Corinthian and Hymenaeus and Alexander were excluded from the Church and the door was closed on them. But the door which shut the offenders out was opened to let the penitent Corinthian in again (2 Cor. ii. 7) "lest he should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow." There was no sign of repentance on the part of Hymenaeus

(2 Tim. ii. 17), nor any desire for readmission, and the door remained closed. The keys are employed then (1) for admission; (2) for excommunication; (3) for readmission, when reconciliation takes place and the offender is readmitted to the table of the Lord" (*Meyrick League Gazette*).

This was the interpretation of the symbol of authority which was first promised to Peter on the day of his memorable confession; but was conferred on the whole Church after the resurrection, and on all who should ever be admitted into the community by the door which Christ opened to the end of time. It meant entire government.

Peter preached the Gospel and so opened the Door.

Tertullian expresses it in this way, that the promise was given first to Peter not only because he made the first brave confession of his Lord, but because Peter was to preach the first sermon, opening the door into the Christian Church. Widely was the door flung open on the streets of Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, when three thousand souls were admitted into the Church. Often since, through the revolving centuries, have the same doors been opened to admit sinful men seeking salvation. As often has a sinner been led in by the Holy Ghost and been admitted to the table of the Lord, so often has there been joy in heaven over a sinner saved. As often has an offending one been refused admission to the table of the Lord, so often has the door been closed on the offender. But when the erring one has shown a gracious spirit and true appreciation of the blessings to be experienced, then as truly as the door was opened at first by reconciliation for admission, then again by the grace of the spirit of God, there is joy and

peace in the assembly of the righteous. The possession of the keys has been the inalienable heritage of the Church of Christ, wherever that Church exists in the humblest circumstances of this earth. "The Lord knoweth them that are His." Man may look at the outward appearance. But Christ looketh at the heart, and wherever there be men assembled in the administration of the spirit of the Lord, and founded on His Word and guided by Him, there the keys are and the power of Christ must be recognised as supreme. "When two or three are met in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." On barren moor, in mountain caves, under snowy peaks or on hot sands, wherever they meet at Christ's invitation to worship their King and Living Head, who has any right to deny them the authority which He has given them? They only attempt to do so, who have the least of Christ's spirit, who arrogate to themselves the sole administration of His Kingdom, which Christ has made as wide as the world, and who show the true spirit of the usurper, who refuse to others what they have no right to themselves. The keys were first given to the Apostolic presbyterate, and over the earth continue with them, and with all who acknowledge Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

CHAPTER XXIII

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

THE Bible evidence is very clear that a complete Church of the New Testament type consisted, as in Philippi, of the saints, bishops, and deacons (Phil. i.). That is not

episcopacy, for there were several bishops and presbyters there : bishops and presbyters were interchangeable. Thus there were really but two officials in the Christian ministry.

1. *Authority*.—Different departments of work are indicated in 1 Tim. v. 17 : “ Let the elders which rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.” There were thus the teaching elder and the ruling elders. There was a plurality of elders, and generally, as in the synagogue, a presiding minister, all on a footing of equality, the minister preached and attended to the administration of sacraments. There were no other ministers than presbyters and deacons. One of them presided at meetings for order’s sake. There was not a shadow of episcopacy there. There were various “ gifts conferred on individuals to profit withal.” To one was given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another faith, to another gifts of healing, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discerning of spirits, to another divers kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues, all by the self-same Spirit dividing to every man severally as he will” (1 Cor. xii. 8-11). But the several gifts did not involve separate officials. Many of them filled several. Agabus, the prophet, for instance, was able to show things to come (Acts xi. 28), and Paul himself was endowed with the gifts of prophecy (Acts xx. 23). Timothy was specially helpful to Paul as an evangelist, but he was a minister or deacon (1 Thess. iii. 2). In Chrysostom’s time bishops and presbyters were interchangeable ; so Theophylact, Decumenius, Jerome, Bede, Anselm, and the Angelic Doctor. Patristic testimony is against lordly

government. Ignatius, Polycarp and Clement represent many of the Churches of a later day, as governed by a single bishop or pastor with a presbytery. According to Cyprian, the bishop and presbyters governed the Church. (*Cypriani Opera*, Epist. v). While Epiphanius does not hesitate to assert that presbyters are the successors of the Apostles (*Epiphan. Opera*, Tom 1; *adversus Haeres*, Lib. 1).

The ruling presbyters had some one to preside, just as the ruling elders now have a president called the Moderator. But there is no diocesan episcopacy there. Clement writes to the Church of Corinth only as "the presbyter of Rome." Moberly says that "it may be taken for certain, that from the middle of the second century there is invariably found behind and above the presbyterate, the background of episcopacy" (p. 216). But there is no episcopacy in having a president or presiding presbyter, no matter what his name may be, whether he be moderator of kirk session, or bishop, or teaching elder, or pastor, the office is the same. The learned professor speaks in ignorance of what the presbyterate means, and the full power which lodges in presbyterianism. It has in itself, in its constitution, in its courts, complete self-government. To talk of a background of episcopate behind and above presbyterianism, is to talk in ignorance of things beyond his knowledge. The presbyterate would be a poor thing to need such staggering help, clothed as it is with the power of a Christian democracy and a righteous administration arranged by God. Yet, the Cunningham lecturer threw aspersion on his own Church, in declaring that there was no prescription in existence, in the institution which

employs him to advance its interests. A different opinion exists, however. "In express Scripture precept, in the precedent of the primitive Churches while under inspired direction, and in the general principles embodied in the New Testament, many believe that it is possible to find the main and essential features of a system of Church government which is of Divine authority and universal obligation" (Bannerman).

2. *Government*.—Besides authority there is further rule and government in the provision which God made in the Presbyterate for all the Churches' need. A question arose in Antioch, a Greek Gentile city, about circumcision. Certain Jews went thither from Judea, urging the astounding doctrine, that "except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Here was an arrest at once on the Gospel, and an attempt to limit the Church to a narrow creed which the Holy Ghost never sanctioned. It was to make the Church run through the Synagogue, and to become a wholly Jewish institution.

Paul and Barnabas discussed the matter with the congregation of Antioch. They were opposed to this doctrine. The Jews had no authority from God, nor from His Word, for imposing this new obligation, and every step in the treatment of this question is worthy of the closest attention. It was designed to form a precedent, in the management of all ecclesiastical matters to the end of time. If the people wished to have the mind of God on this subject, Paul was there, Heaven's inspired messenger, to give an infallible indication of the will of God. But Paul and the Apostles could not be always with them. The day must come when all extraordinary officials should be

removed. It would be better for the training of the Church to have this question settled in open court, as all other matters would require to be, under the Presbyterate. So it was determined that certain of them should go to Jerusalem with Paul and Barnabas, to have this subject treated in regular order, as the Church would have to settle all great questions which might arise when the Apostles were dead. On their journey south the tidings they had to communicate occasioned great joy, that Gentiles were being converted to God. When they arrived in Jerusalem they were received by the whole Christian community, saints, elders, and apostles, and the goodness of God was rehearsed to them, of the progress of the Gospel in Gentile lands.

It was not long till the same point was started in Jerusalem regarding obligation of circumcision and the law of Moses, and the Church had to face it. "The Apostles and elders," those who were entrusted with ruling, "came together for to consider of this matter," and this important assembly is known in all ecclesiastical history as the Assembly of Jerusalem.

After the preliminaries were over, there was much disputing about this matter. It could not be otherwise, for to the Jewish mind, the law of Moses could not be superseded. At length Peter rose to speak and recounted how that God had honoured him in first opening the door of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and God gave witness to the truth by giving them the Holy Ghost. God put no difference. Were they then to tempt God by imposing obligations where God meant none, by placing a yoke around the necks of Gentiles which Jews could not bear? He reminded them of the great truth, that Jew and

Gentile were saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The address of Peter made a profound impression. Paul and Barnabas followed with an account of miracles and wonders which God wrought among the Gentiles. Then the presiding elder, James, closed the discussion by bringing the prophecy of Amos ix. 11 to bear on the facts to which they had listened. It was clear from this that the residue of men and all the Gentiles were to seek the Lord. God had His own great purpose. Who were they to cross the judgment of the Lord? He ends by declaring his sentence, or as we would say, moving a resolution, "that the Gentiles already turned to God should not be troubled with needless burdens, but that they should be "directed to abstain from pollutions of idols, from fornication, from things strangled and from blood." The proposal of James was unanimously approved by the Assembly. The decision was also engrossed in letters to be sent back to Antioch, with Judas and Silas a deputation of their own, along with Paul and Barnabas and the representatives of Antioch. When this epistle was delivered and read to the people, they rejoiced greatly for the consolation and the freedom. Soon after Paul and Silas went forth on a missionary tour through Syria and Cilicia, everywhere confirming the Churches, causing great joy by the decrees which were ordained by the Apostles and elders in the Assembly of Jerusalem.

3. *Precedent for Assemblies.*—Now, in this simple narrative a few facts stand out prominently, that the Church of Christ is liable to trial, and God made provision in the Presbyterate for settling all disputes by referring everything to the Word of God. This dispute arose in Antioch,

where there was no means of settling it, for it concerned the entire Church. It was referred to Jerusalem, the centre of the Christian world at the time, where a representative assembly met consisting of Apostles and elders. The assembly met and discussed this question publicly, and a decision was pronounced, by authority of Scripture, which was carried back to Antioch and over the East, and was everywhere received with submission and gratitude to God, for the consolation it yielded. It was a remarkable circumstance that this incident occurred, and that a record of it should be preserved in Scripture with such minuteness, unless it be for the distinct purpose that it should be a precedent in all ecclesiastical disputes. Seeing that the founders of the Christian Church were Jews, and that the Gentile world was invited to enter, the relation of the Gentile converts to the law of Moses was sure to lead to trouble ; but it was well that nearly twenty years elapsed before it was stirred, and the young Church was well enough established to stand the strain of a very thorough discussion. It arose at Antioch through the zeal of some Jewish converts from Judea, and it was well that it should have been there. But why was there any discussion allowed ? Could not the matter be settled at once by a reference to God, or to the judgment of His inspired Apostles, who could there inform them infallibly about the right, and what was to be the rule of Christ's kingdom ? Had not Paul done as much at other critical moments, and declared the will of God, and settled difficult matters, ending thereby much needless dispute ? But no ; the question grew, and men were suffered to take strong views on the subject, until it was obvious it could

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not be settled in Antioch. In a matter in which every converted man in the Gentile world had an interest, it was seen that the discussion must be carried further, and the voice of the entire democratic Church, in its widest possible capacity, must be brought to bear on it, and so it was referred to Jerusalem, where several Apostles were met, and the largest assembly of elders and members of the Church could be convened.

Then we read that the Apostles and elders came together to consider the matter. But why should the elders have any place in the discussion? They were not inspired men, and if all that was wanted was an infallible utterance on this important subject, surely they had the Apostles, and required no more. And when the decision was reached, why was the deliverance made in the name of the Apostles and elders? The discussion was not that of inspired men. No doubt the Apostles were inspired, but it was by men reasoning as ordinary intelligent members would always require to do. There cannot be a doubt, but that the whole incident is recorded that the Church of Christ through the ages, might not be in doubt how to order its procedure in similar circumstances, where Scripture must be the sole authority to guide, and decisions must bind all. When we see in Presbyterian communities Presbyters meeting in General Assembly, and difficult questions referred to it, or the interests of the whole communion to pass under review, and the elders, *i.e.* the teaching and ruling elders, convened from all corners of the land to adjudicate on difficulties, in the name and by authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, but without any Apostles, who have long since disappeared, we have a picture enacting in

the spirit, and after the example set in the New Testament Church in the great Assembly of Jerusalem, guided in everything by Scripture, and final in its judgments. Names may change, but the principles are there. It is the superintendence of the whole Church of its own interests, and the adjudication by the entire Church in its own spiritual affairs, and by its own officials in their proper legitimate places and functions, and apart from all interference of any civil power on this earth. Christ is in His own Church as Prophet, Priest and King, guiding the whole interests of His kingdom, and causing all the shades of thought and judgment to redound to His glory and the good of men. The Church is bound to be guided by no other standard but God's Word, and is not at liberty to have regard to anything but the revealed will of Christ.

Such was the singular unanimity, that while the Apostles and elders alone deliberated, the decree was drawn out in the name of the whole Church—Apostles, elders and brethren, the vast majority of these being Jews. On that decision there hung the free evangelisation of the world and the Church's right of self-government.

4. *Possibilities of Unions.*—But there hung on this also the possibility of the unification of the Church. Let men reject it who may, there is in that assembly a precedent which the Presbyterian Churches should follow. Between the Churches of Scotland, there is now so little difference that the day must soon come, when a rising sense of brotherhood will sweep the last impediment away.

Even in Independent or Congregational Churches there is this peculiarity. Part of the New Testament is followed, there are teaching elders and ruling elders called deacons,

men who will not subscribe the Westminster Confession of Faith, yet preach the most of it to their people. Well we know there are no doctrines so popular as the grand doctrines of Grace, the strong magnificent teaching of Christ's power to save, and the security of all who trust in Jesus Christ. Is it not the fact too, that there is the longing for an assembly, for its strength and conserving influence among Evangelical Congregationalists? Is it too much to say to brethren who love the Lord, that the conceptions of the Church of the New Testament are such, that it should again be to all the model Church, and the precedent for all who desire to obey His Word. And there will be a larger picture. Is it too wide a desire that men should study the New Testament Church more, that which in primitive times was established by Christ in the Presbyterate, may become a basis of union of a comprehensive character before schism rent the beautiful creation of the Son of God, before the shadow of my Lord the Bishop, or his grace the Archbishop, or his holiness the Pope, rent asunder the ideal of unity? The Lord Himself the only infallible one is to return to the earth again; will He recall men to the old, familiar, but neglected Word, "One is your Master even Christ, all ye are brethren" (Matt. xxiii. 23). Is it too much to say that He may recall His Church to the simple model, and Jew and Gentile come to find, that with all their experimenting, Christ's own method is the best, for all the purposes of Grace?

CHAPTER XXIV

SIGNIFICANT OMISSIONS

THE Church of the Old Testament and that of the New were established for the same divine object, the salvation of a sinful world, and for the exhibition of the love and the mercy of God to fallen man. The means by which this was to be effected were all of God's choice and appointment. In the Old Testament Church there was no access to God for the people, but through the mediation of the priesthood, and high priest and priest occupied the most prominent place in the old economy. The entire worship of God was changed, however, in the New by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. By the one great propitiatory offering of Christ all became revolutionised. Christ Himself became the Great High Priest, who gave Himself as the one atoning sacrifice for ever. By one vast stroke of mercy He made all His followers priests. For that reason, in the enumeration of the officials of the New Testament Church, the name of the priests is significantly omitted. They were no longer needed. The incongruity of having priests for priests would be conspicuous and absurd. In Apostolic times the Word was never mentioned, for the functions of the priests were unknown. Among the heresies of the primitive Church there was no attempt to introduce a priest where Christ left a blank. When the messengers of Christ dealt with the souls of men, and meant spiritual work and the real change of the heart, no such official could be introduced. In early days we have historical proof for the watchful attitude of the early members of

Christ's spiritual body, for "the trying of spirits," and the expulsion of unreal professors ; then the progress of the Church was marvellous. The fiercest persecution kept the Church pure, and for all it grew and prospered till everywhere the poor and persecuted thing, possessed a moral strength and glory which drew the notice of the world.

There is no exact date to mark the introduction of the priest, the sacerdos, or hierus among the servants of Christ. But it must have been in sub-apostolic days, when men lent themselves to form compromises to gain the heathen, and in the revolutionary days of Constantine the pagans kept to their own systems to the last, with their priests, sacrifices and idols. They became absorbed not by conversion, but by the Church adopting them and their methods. Through mediæval times it remained as a blot on the Church of God, wherein the God of this world left the mark of His hand on the fair creation of the Almighty.

The appearance of the priest was not from God, but from God's enemy, and it meant the restoration of bondage and error. The introduction of the sacerdos into the community meant an alliance between Christ and Satan, the god of this world, and the alliance was fatal to the Church's purity and power. Alliances of this kind are common enough in our time, where Christ and Mammon, or Christ and Satan, run a concern jointly, to use commercial phraseology. But Christ refuses such co-partnery.

1. *Priest and Presbyter Irreconcilable.*—Besides, there was no congruity between the presbyter and the priest. The presbyter was instituted for ruling and teaching. The priestly functions were the shedding of blood, and the offering of sacrifice. The shedding of blood would be

an abhorrent thing to the presbyter. Those who talk glibly, since Milton's days, of the similarity of priest and presbyter, and that all the difference between them is that "presbyter is priest written large," show their own ignorance of the entire matter. The two are as different as they well can be, and mean two entirely different functions. There is nothing in common between them. The sacrificing priest, or the priest in any intermediary position between man and his Maker, is utterly out of place in the New Testament. Where God has made man free of the priest, it is sin on man's part to resume the bondage. It was a direct interference with God's purpose of mercy. The divine intention was that the world was to be redeemed by the preaching of the Gospel. But Satan's intention was to substitute sacrifice, and so to defeat God. When the priest came in, the presbyter went out, and Satan's artifice, used against God from the beginning, was adopted for the cure of mankind. The original conflict with God was resumed.

2. *Unscriptural Introduction of Priests.*—The appearance of the sacerdos in the New Testament Church is wholly unscriptural. There is not the least authority for it, nor for what it signifies, and it is but an unwarrantable interference with the order which Christ Himself instituted. It is the displacing of Christ's appointment by the creation of a novel, unscriptural official, without one word of authority from Christ, and for wholly unscriptural functions. Christ by His apostles made ample provision for all man's spiritual wants, and for all that His Church would require. Anything else is a displacement of Christ and His work. There is not one word in Scripture indicating that any want was

felt for which Christ did not make full provision. The working out of His plan and the great apostolic project of the Church were complete.

As the ages advanced this became the source of unmitigated mischief in the Church of Jesus Christ. It introduced an entirely new element. It changed the character of the Church, and threw it hundreds of years backward, to the abrogated system of dead works for salvation. Instead of preaching the Gospel and a free pardon through the great atoning sacrifice of Christ according to God's institution, it introduced men to be mediators between the Almighty and His creatures, as if they were needed. Instead of Christ opening heaven and inviting mankind to enter through His work, men clothed with a fictitious authority, usurped the place of Christ, and went forth to deceive the world, to teach men that salvation depended on a creature and not on Christ alone, and to render the work of Christ of none effect. Further, it was exceedingly bold to say that they had Christ's authority for this stupendous change. Never did Satan devise anything more mischievous. It was his masterpiece to defeat the work of the Redeemer, and to render all His sacrifice and suffering of no avail. To displace the presbyter whom the Apostles placed in office, and to reintroduce the priest, was a deliberate retrograde movement, back from the covenant of grace to the dead covenant of works. It was not from God or with His sanction, or with that of the Holy Ghost, but it was a mere human device, no doubt pleasing to human nature, but displeasing to God. It was a revolutionary interference with God's plans of salvation, and the doctrines of the glorious Gospel. It was Satan's artifice to

defeat the work of Jesus Christ. To call this functionary into existence, and to give him the position of a sacrificing priest; to put into his hands a bit of paste, and to instruct him to go through an elaborate liturgical service in the consecration of it; to pretend to change it at a word into the body and the blood of Jesus Christ, and to have it adored as very God, and the eating of it to become "an offering for the sins of the living and the dead." It was to tell men that salvation was to be by a sacrament instead of by faith. Salvation was to be by the eating of a paltry bit of bread, instead of simple faith in Christ—a purely material worship for the spiritual worship of the New Testament. It meant a complete revolution in God's plan of redemption. Perhaps Satan himself doubted his own ability to impose on mankind, and to turn the most sacred doctrine of the Bible into ridicule, to influence men to accept the delusion. The most pitiful thing is to find leading prelatists homologating these revolutions, and that because God in His providence did not prevent the changes, to infer the divine approval of them, and of the hierarchical system. As well might men charge all the evil and rebellion of a sinful world on God.

CHAPTER XXV

FATAL CHANGES

THE evidence is clear that a complete Church of the New Testament type existed in Philippi consisting (verse 1) of saints, bishops (or presbyters) and deacons—a two-fold ministry. For hundreds of years things proceeded happily

on these lines, and this was clearly the Apostolic model. Cities and countries heard the Gospel and became obedient to the truth. The progress was amazing. Now and again towards the close of the Apostles' years, the restless spirit of ambitious men began to trouble the Church, against whom the Apostles spoke severely. In the third Epistle of John, we have the venerable Apostle denouncing "Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them . . . prating against us with malicious words." Against the conduct of these wicked innovators the aged Apostle spoke with no measured words, urging the Church "not to follow that which was evil but that which is good." Instead of countenancing the budding of the restless spirit after Episcopacy, as Lightfoot and Moberly would have us all to believe, the Apostle John condemned the rising influence and opposed it to the utmost. He dreaded the assumption of supreme power by the administrative official in any congregation.

1. *Presiding Bishop Appears.*—After the age of the Apostles was over, there followed a number of sub-Apostolic men called the "Early Fathers," between whom and the founders of the Church there was, as we have seen, the greatest difference when changes began to be introduced. The first was the appointment of a president with the name of bishop. In Clement's Epistle, presbyters or bishops, with deacons, are the only office-bearers. The testimony of Hermas is to the same effect. The Didachê bears the same witness. "Choose for yourselves bishops and deacons." Any higher order is unknown. Ignatius, in his early Epistle to the Romans, fails in any reference to a bishop existing in Rome similar to those who appeared

in Antioch, Smyrna and Ephesus. Polycarp, who died as a martyr about the middle of the second century, bears similar testimony for Philippi. In the later epistles of Ignatius we are faced with a different arrangement in the Churches of Syria and Asia Minor, where we find a bishop in many Churches exalted extravagantly over the presbyters. Three orders begin to appear now—bishops, presbyters and deacons. The presbyters seem to have timidly yielded to the great innovation of entrusting the bishop with the dispensing of baptism and the eucharist. It is of this period Gore oversteps the evidence, when he says, on the strength of a rhetorical expression of Ignatius, “that Ignatius knows of no non-episcopal era.” But even yet there is no instance of Diocesan Episcopacy as we know it. It was nothing more than a modified congregational episcopacy, where each congregation had a president called bishop, and to this the most of the Churches seem to tend about the middle of the second century.

It is not surprising that when the tendency to change became powerful enough, alterations should appear. The history of the last seventy years in our land, under our own eyes, is enough to show the remarkable changes which may be introduced, and how rapidly they may prevail. Seventy years ago, the doctrine of Prayer-Book of the Church of England was universally believed and accepted, “that the sacrifices of Masses, in which it was commonly said that the priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits,” and this was accepted as the truth of God according to Art. xxxi. But Newman set himself with marvellous, may we say audacious, ingenuity to show

(Tract xc.) that what was meant in the condemnation was not the doctrine of "the Mass, but superstitious Masses," surely a distinction without a difference. The wonder was if the man himself, with his remarkable intellect, believed his own words. It was thought that none but fools could be caught by such frivolity. It was beyond belief that Newman, with his clear intellect, could impose on any Englishman; but it is the unlikely which has taken place. Thousands on thousands have come under the infatuation. A great schism has taken place in the Church which was believed to be the citadel of the Protestant religion. The Church of England is in the throes of a great crisis. At present (1902) a Ritualist clergy list is published bearing 9600 names of clergymen, with their addresses, who are helping forward the Romeward movement in the national Church, and year by year the progress is extraordinary. The bishops seem powerless to check the evil, and at present, in the full sweep of the great Catholic revival, it is difficult to say whether the whole English Church may not go down before this powerful reaction. Men are slow to find the way to Christ, and very reluctant to avail themselves of the mercy of God, provided in the Gospel. But let some fad be started among mankind, no matter what may be the shadowy character of the delusion, the world will go after it with a rush. Through the history of the globe there are few who find the strait gate, and who have the courage to go in thereat. But many easily find the broad road, and with a rush go in, though it lead to destruction.

2. *Conversion of Constantine.*—The conversion of Constantine in A.D. 312, and the alliance of the Church with

his Government, produced a mighty change. This prince was educated in paganism, and being accustomed to the pomp of pagan worship, and the honours paid to the chief priests, he became anxious to imitate them. To show his zeal for the Christian religion, and to take away the prejudices of the ancient idolators, he copied their methods. Eusebius says that his first efforts were to substitute magnificent temples for the small and mean buildings of the primitive Church, especially in the principal cities, such as Constantinople and Antioch, and in Jerusalem. He built a magnificent temple in the place of Christ's sepulchre. To have nothing wanting, he appointed a solemn consecration of it, as the pagans had of their temples. Great numbers of bishops from the provinces were invited at the public charges, some of the imperial magnates were ordered to attend the solemnities, and ministers of God adorned the festival, some by preaching and praying, others by orations commending the Emperor and supplicating the divine favour. The clergy, now that persecution was ended, had every possible mark of distinction. They were appointed arbiters in disputes. Another historian, Sozomon, says the Emperor gave leave to all litigants to betake themselves to bishops to have justice. High sounding titles were conferred on the principal ecclesiastics, making them metropolitans and patriarchs. Kings and princes sought their benediction, receiving it with bent heads and kissing the hands of priests, believing themselves protected by their prayers. The occasion of all this was the humour of the Emperor setting the external polity of the Church after the civil Government. Time has amply proved the folly of imperial interference with

Christ's arrangements. Clerical ambition became the towering evil of the world, and the head of the Church made a throne for himself ultimately, to dominate the might of kings, and to oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.

The religious life of the Church grew cold, and innovations and changes became easier of accomplishment. It was certainly a great one that the teaching elder, or the minister even at the emperor's suggestion, should consent to divest himself of part of his ministerial duties in the dispensation of the sacrament of baptism, and of the supper of the Lord, and hand these duties over to the bishop for his chief function. That was a direct interference with the Lord's injunction, "All ye are brethren." There was the arrangement of a kind of inferior minister who was free to preach the Gospel, free to visit, free to do any other service, but the sacraments were conserved for superior agents, into whose hands it was said for the greater "convenience of discipline," these higher functions should be placed. This was the first sight of the sacramental and sacerdotal element which has wrought much mischief since. It was the losing hold of a great principle which Christ Himself established, the parity of His servants, the brotherhood of His ministers. None but Christ could have arranged a change, and having once laid down the prominent feature of His service it should have remained, till He had authorised any change for the part it had to play in the evangelisation of the world. It was designed to influence all social life, as well as all administrative action. In rule, government, and authority it was meant to play a great part in the social life of the earth. The conceptions of Christ were vast, and

reached to every land to the end of time; but the innovators had their own narrow, selfish ends to gain, and the world may have to wait for centuries to take in the great conceptions of the Son of God, in all their freshness and power.

The interference with a principle which Christ established for one or two centuries was the raising of a sluice, which let in all muddy influences of the world into the life of the Church. When priestly supremacy swept away the simplicity and humility of the service of God, then the spirit of the world rushed in, and the desire became common to make the Church a great world power, fashioned like other earthly organisations. "My kingdom is not of this world," said the Divine Founder; but those who followed ambition set the divine words aside, to make the Church the stepping stone to their own aggrandisement. The Divine Book which embodied the great Founder's intentions was thrust aside to make room for the altered circumstances of the time, and at last a visible head was thought of to represent Jesus Christ, with courtiers, officials, functions similar to those in the palace of the Roman Emperor. From that day the Church became pervaded by ambition and display. It was now to conquer the world by another force which could overawe men, but the gentle, loving spirit of God and the Gospel were no longer thought of, for converting the soul, or influencing the heart, or changing the character of mankind.

3. *Violation of First Principles.*—Christ never conferred on the officials the authority to violate the first principles of the constitution of the Church, as he laid those down by His inspired Apostles. It was never His intention that

men should overthrow the plain spirit and intentions of His kingdom, as these were revealed in Scripture, or in any way interfere with the functions which he saw fit to call into existence for His own high and holy purposes. If we are to believe in the existence of evil at all, and in its embodied head and centre, it could not be, but, that as Christ's intentions of mercy to mankind unfolded before Satan in an organised system, for rescuing men from death, the blackest designs for the overthrow of Christ's kingdom were invented by the great enemy of our race. For that reason one of the greatest theologians that God ever gave to Scotland declared "that the attempts which were put into execution for frustrating the leading objects of Christianity, were devised by Satan for depriving men of the important advantages for this world and the next, which the Gospel conveyed" (Cunningham). There is no other way of accounting for their marvellous ingenuity, and their singular success, in gradually loading the simple Church with various gradations of weighty offices and officials, till the original divine pattern was lost. Gradually in the course of generations there came to be the usurpation of prerogatives, till the head of the Church claimed to be the representative of God himself, higher than emperors or kings, with a right to dominate every power and agency of the earth. The marvel is that good men were induced to lend their influence to the master designer for the object. Ignatius, in 107 A.D., gave the first decided move to Satan's great project. Then a century later Cyprian of Carthage helped the movement. His writings afford the battlefield for the controversialists in the great prelatie conflicts. Satan tempted Christ with the glory of the world

if He should worship him, but was defeated. He tempted the Church's leaders in the same way and succeeded. And their Pope became ultimately "God on earth," the one infallible one, the fountain of all honour, the head of all government secular and sacred to dominate the earth; under the usurped name of the vicar of Christ he rivals Christ Himself. But that is not all. Christ's great purpose was overturned. The Galilean fishermen were replaced through the patronage of the empire by Romish patriarchs, primates, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, archdeacons, deacons, sub-deacons, exorcists, readers, acolytes, porters, and a huge host of excrescences, the product of human ambition. Were the fishermen back to this earth, could they recognise their old Church amidst all this glare of pride and folly? The Church was designed to be on the humblest lines, for the propagation of the Gospel and the salvation of the world. By its departure from the divine rule it began the great apostacy which blighted all the progress for a thousand years.

4. *The Church the scene of strife.*—The officers of the Church encouraged to seek places of honour very soon gave way to it. Under their preferments a wretched spirit of faction and contention was the first painful product. In their Synods their contentions disparaged the Christian name. No sooner were they clear of their persecutions than they strove with one another. The good Emperor saw this with regret and said pathetically: "I entreat you, beloved ministers of God and servants of Jesus Christ, take away the cause of your disagreement, establish peace among yourselves." It is said that he burnt the letters they had written in bitterness against each other, that such

monuments of their infirmity might not remain to disgrace them ; but his endeavours were to little purpose. The Holy Spirit was not among them. Their work was abandoned.

5. *Other means for Church Extension.*—Humble Galilean peasants were formerly the great champions. Rough men preached the Gospel ; their burning words were sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit. Never were such words heard before. The love of God overflowed their speech like a river over its banks, and hoary superstitions fell before them. The world was in process of reconstruction ; but their honours spoiled them, and new methods were adopted to suit the times. In the name of conquering the world for Christ, the leading features of heathenism were accepted and heathen nations became absorbed. Pagan symbols were laid under tribute, and the beautiful simplicity of the Church was gradually overlaid with idolatry. The great object of the existence of the Church, the Gospel, and the salvation of the world were obscured. Heathen nations entered the Church with all their symbols. Charles Reade says (“Cloister and Hearth,” lxxiv.) : “The ancient Greeks and Romans were Polytheists and the invocation of saints was ostensibly adopted to gain them, for in Holy Writ there is no polytheism of any sort. The ancient mariners were Monotheists and worshipped Venus as Regina and Cœlorum Stella Maris. They came to worship the Virgin Mary instead, and to call her the Queen of Heaven and the Star of the Sea. Now Roman Catholics erect chapels along our British shores to Mary as the Star of the Sea—the old name and the old adoration. Our incense, holy water, altars ; our candles

are not new, they were part of the old pagan worship. They were adopted by us to gain the heathen. We celebrate the miraculous conception of the Virgin on the 2nd February. The ancient Roman pagans celebrated the miraculous conception of Juno on the 2nd February. Our Feast of all Saints is on the 2nd November; the Festum Dei Mortis was on the same day. In the Temple of Paphian Venus were a hundred altars. And we have a hundred lights around St Peter's reputed tomb; we do not invent numbers. Our vestments are not new; we owe them and priests to Numa Pompilius, except the girdle, and the stole they are Jewish. Our very images are pagan, says the writer. The toe of St Peter in St Peter's Church, Rome, is well worn with kisses. But the Egyptians had it originally from the Assyrians, and the Greeks had it from the Egyptians, and the Romans from the Greeks, and in pagan times they placed their lips on the same toe in adoration of Jupiter. We have not invented much."

This is not Apostolic succession but the unblushing adoption and perpetuation of pure paganism, under another name to gain the heathen, and to make them believe that they were members of Christ, without their hearts being changed by the Holy Ghost.¹

¹ Bower, in his "History of the Popes," ii. 523, describes the orders Pope Gregory gave his missionaries to Britain, to adopt the ways of the pagans so as to capture pagans, not to abolish practices, but to consecrate them. He specifies a particular ceremony among the Saxons of slaying many oxen as sacrifices to the *devil*. "You must not abolish the custom, but appoint a new festival to be kept on the day of the consecration of churches, or the birthday of saints. On these days the Saxons may make their feasts and kill their oxen just as they did while pagans. They shall offer their thanks not to the devil but to God. It

Our baptismal regeneration is not new. It is borrowed from the pagans. Our crosses are not new. They existed thousands of years ago in the mythology of Egypt, just as they are found to-day at Indian fountains as pagan symbols. Our eastward position and sacrificial garbs are very old. They were known in Egypt. The great leader of the unbelief of this world has not shown much originality. The same hand is conspicuous. The god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not, and he has done it by the same arguments, and by means of the same symbols he is imposing on men to defeat the pure spiritual worship of the New Testament, to destroy mankind. Three times has Satan endeavoured to defeat God in the light He vouchsafed. To the patriarchs God revealed the truth ; but it degenerated into paganism with the great mass of mankind. He interfered with the Mosaic religion until it degenerated into pure phariseism. The Christian religion the god of this world has taken under hand, until it is fast becoming a Catholic revival over many portions of the earth. In all the corruptions which are taking place in true religion, there is a remarkable resemblance throughout their leading principles. The same intention appears in the conformity, which exists between the rites and ceremonies of Paganism and Romanism and Ritualism, or what was for this reason the Culdees refused to conform to the recommendations of the popish clergy.

iii. 1, 2, Boniface IV. observing the partiality of Phocas to his See asked of him the famous Pantheon (built by Agrippa in honour of Cybele and all the other gods and goddesses), and thence took his name. Having obtained it, he changed it into a church, substituting the Virgin ("the Mother of God ") to the mother of the gods, and the Christian martyrs to the other pagan deities, changing only the names, the idols remaining unaltered.

ever be the name by which it is known. At an early date the Church of the New Testament had the best attention of Satan to defeat its object. He did it by a combination of spiritual doctrine, and the gaudy symbolism of paganism with human ambition. The great schism began when men interfered with God's method, and substituted showy functions and lordly places, for the words of life which Apostles first taught, and the humble agents who knew no power but that of the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE BONDAGE OF TRADITIONS

HUMAN enactments engender bondage and the multiplication of burdens, for when men in their wisdom imagine they improve on Scripture, they only lead to confusion and increase trouble. One man has as much right to assume power as another. The Bible alone can lay down obligations, for it speaks with authority. Instances abound both in the Old Testament and in the New, of the danger of admitting any interference on man's part, with the enactments of God. It leads to the ostentation and bondage of religious rites without any reason.

The Talmud an Illustration.—God gave ten commandments to the Jews, and everyone knows that they were deemed sufficient by God for the regulation of the morals of mankind. Besides, they were a representation of God Himself. Everyone knows how comprehensive they are in all their spiritual meanings, and that it is more than man can do to keep them fully. But the Jews, no doubt

from the best of motives, put hedges around each commandment, to keep men as far away as possible from the breach of the law. Each "fence," however, became a new commandment, leading to the creation of another "fence," and the multiplication of enactments, which in the course of years crystallised into new statutes, and these in the eyes of their teachers became as holy, if not more binding, than the original simple enactment of the great Lawgiver. Hence arose that innumerable series of questions, discussions and directions which became crystallised in the Talmud. This became an intolerable bondage to all Talmudists, and those who regulate their lives by the enactments of that code, till the original ten have swelled into an unsufferable yoke of 613 commandments, which every true Jew is bound to observe. It was a grievous burden in Christ's day, and was condensed in the ostentatious display of the size of the Phylacteries or Tephilin.

The Phylacteries.—These consist of two little square cases of parchment, the one for the forehead, the other for the left arm. These cases are divided into four partitions, each of which contains verses out of the Pentateuch, beautifully written on fine vellum. Thus we find in one compartment (Deut. vi. 4-9) that standard of the Jewish creed, "Hear, O Israel," etc.; the second section (Deut. xi. 13-21); the third (xiii. 1-9); and the fourth (verses 11-16 of the same chapter)—all passages in which the commandment is enjoined to put the law as a sign upon the hand and as a memorial between the eyes. On the outside of the case there is visible the letter *shin*, which represents *shaddai*, i.e. the Almighty, one of the holy names of Jehovah into which the Cabalists put a great

mystery. By a long thong slipping through a loop and wound round the head, the one case is kept on the forehead, to indicate that mind and senses and all the faculties are subject to His service. The other is upon the arm opposite the heart as the Talmud prescribes: the thong is wound seven times round the arm and on the second finger, to indicate that all the longings and designs of the heart are to be subject to Him. Hence arose endless questions about the Tephilin, and common people were misled to make them broad for ostentation in worship. "All their works they do," Christ said, "to be seen of men," as if there could be a particle of religion in such proceedings.

Talith.—So also the Jewish Talith, or prayer robe, became an object of great veneration. The ancient Hebrews seem, like the Arabs and Bedouins, to have worn a white woollen garment from the head to the feet, but with the Jews this received a special religious signification by Divine command. They were ordered to put in the borders of their garments, throughout their generations, a ribband of blue, that while looking thereon they "should remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them, and be holy unto God." This is still in use among them. For the fringes or Zizzith they take fine woollen threads spun carefully by pious Jewish women, who knit these in a particular manner (for which again the Talmud gives the most minute directions), and fasten them on the corner of the Talith. Richer people take silk strips, and costlier ones on the great festivals. The Cabalists do not fail to find out in these fringes and their knots a deep mystery. They lay such importance on them that they pretend the whole law depends on their observance. By computing

the mystical numbers in the letters of the word Zizzith they bring out the number 613, which is exactly the number of the commandments incumbent on each Jew to observe. These are in most cases trifles, for from the moment the Jew sets foot on his floor in the morning, till the last action at night, all is regulated by the rigorous enactments of the Talmud. One can understand the bondage of tradition.

The Mezuzah.—The law was also placed on the doorposts in the Mezuzah in those cited passages, so arranged that the mysterious letter *shin* could be seen by those who go out and enter the house. The ritualists of all ages contend that the religious sense is so much the stronger, the thought of God so much the quicker, and the consciousness of moral responsibility so much sharper, the more men are reminded by such observances of their relationship to God. But the experience of all ages, and the testimony of Christ, is entirely adverse to such contentions. The departure from simple Scripture becomes an intolerable bondage, and a snare when men impose restrictions where God has not, and try to heap up righteousness by external actions, instead of the spirit (Dr Moss of Stuttgart).

Traditions.—There came also in early Christian ages a remarkable proof of the danger of superadding to Scripture, a vast accumulation of human tradition and frivolous enactments, to impose intolerable burdens on the members of the Church. The Church of Rome, while professing to accept the Scriptures as authoritative, makes them of no effect by their traditions. When we are pointed to traditions as a rule of faith, we have to deal with an unauthorised delusion, a huge ponderous accumulation of bygone ages, of which very few have any conception.

“The supplement of the Scriptures and the extraordinary bulk of added authorities is such, as to make that Rule of Faith so unwieldy that it is quite useless. Besides the Apocrypha there are the acts and decisions of the Church, embracing several volumes of the Bulls of the popes, ten volumes of Decretals, thirty-one folio volumes of Acts of Councils, fifty-one folio volumes of the *Acta Sanctorum*, a whole library of the works of the Greek and Latin Fathers. How enormous that library is may be inferred from the work of the Abbé Migné, in a prospectus of which he claims that out of scattered materials in all places, ages, and languages, he has gathered the substance of Catholic tradition. This work is a whole library in itself, to be seen in the Reference Department of the British Museum. Those who have counted the immense quartos tell us that there are 389 of them. It is evident that a rule of faith, so complicated and so cumbrous, is useless, and affords a ready excuse for insisting, that in all questions which arise the priest must be consulted. Thus the people have no rule of faith, but must hand over mind and conscience to sacerdotal keeping. But even the most laborious priest cannot master such a mass of literature; and accordingly the logical result of such a chaos of authority is to supersede it altogether, by making the Church itself—that is in the last resort, the pope—the sole authority (Dr Monro Gibson, “Protestant Principles,” p. 32).

It might be asked what is the practical utility of this vast accumulation of pious opinion. Should a man spend his life in the examination of this huge dust-heap? It leads to one discovery, that there is no such thing as

unanimity among the fathers, and the "unanimous consent of the fathers" so much applauded in the Council of Trent does not exist. Chillingworth's words come as a great relief: "The Bible and the Bible alone is our religion. I profess plainly that I cannot find any rest for the sole of my foot, but upon this rock only. I see plainly there are popes against popes, councils against councils, fathers against themselves, a consent of fathers in one age against the consent of fathers of another age, the Church of one age against the Church of another age." There is no such thing as unity of opinion or universal consent on any one doctrine. He who launches on the ocean of the opinions of the fathers sails on a sea without a shore, and on an ocean without a bottom. Take for instance that one important text referred to already, and of which Roman Catholics make so much as their leading Scripture for the dogmas of the supremacy of their pope and his "Infallibility": "Thou art Peter and upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." The greatest writers acknowledge that this is their principal text. In great gilt letters it is proudly raised around the inside of the dome of St Peter, as the crown of the Papacy, the proud diadem of the boastful Church which God Himself has set up, they say, to rule the globe. Here around a text where unity ought to prevail, and where we might imagine there would be only one opinion, there is endless controversy, not only among the fathers, but among modern theologians. The controversy has sprung from the Lord's play on the words whether the word *rock* refers to Peter or to Christ. A careful study of the words will at once indicate the difficulty. In the Greek the words are *σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ*

ταύτη τῇ πέτρᾳ, or in the Vulgate, Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram. The construction clearly distinguishes between *Petrus* and *petram*, between Peter and the Rock. In the Greek and in the Latin petros and petrus are masculine, meaning *a stone*, and in the Greek petra and Latin petra, both words are feminine and mean *a Rock*. Was Peter the Rock, Peter the fisherman, the son of Jonas? or was the heaven-taught confessor to be the Rock? That could scarcely be Christ's meaning, when the same man in a very short time became the mouthpiece of Hell, the very tempter casting a stumbling-block before the Redeemer on His way to the Cross. Or was Peter's discovery of the divinity of Christ the Rock on which the redeemed Church was to be built? It is thus the world is divided. The advocates of the papacy see Peter the man in some shape or another, otherwise their proud boast would be on the changing sand. But in every age those who have discerned the need of a solid foundation, to withstand the fierce onsets of the powers of darkness, are convinced that the Rock was Peter's remarkable discovery of a Rock in the divinity of Christ, strong enough for all the Church's need. On every hand the truth becomes the clearer. The Bible and the Bible alone leads to strength and freedom. Man's enactments and opinions fill the world with uncertainty, bondage, and an abiding fear. Of what use is the vast accumulation of the opinions of dead men at discord among themselves. We have Christ's own word in the New Testament, and more we have the example of His life to be the constant abiding interpretation. The Bible and the Bible alone is the safe unerring guide without needless burdens. The Holy Ghost is the

one abiding teacher. Though all the opinions of the fathers should perish in some great conflagration the world would not be impoverished by being relieved of the endless, conflicting opinions.

CHAPTER XXVII

VALIDITY OF ORDINATION OF THE PRESBYTERATE

WE come to the important institution of ordination in the New Testament Church, that is the designation to office. Timothy was under instruction to commit the doctrines of the Church to faithful men, who should teach them to others also; and thus the continuity of the ministry was provided for. We have seen the Presbytery carrying out these express orders by the ordination of presbyters. It was thus part of the Divine command, and it was a proper seemly act, that when a man was found qualified and called to special service as an official in God's house, the Presbytery should designate him to duty, by a special service for the purpose, and by laying on of hands of those already in service. This was at Lystra and at other places.

It was the custom in the Synagogue.—This was the practice which was observed in the case of elders in the Jewish Synagogue. The presbyters were first selected by the choice of the congregation, and then set apart by the imposition of hands.

In the Christian Church each baptised member had a distinct place, fully recognised from the beginning. Among the prerogatives was the right of the election of officials.

Of this they could not be deprived except by their own misconduct, or by the tyrannical usurpation of earthly governments. All the liberty and privileges Christ gave to His Church lodged in the members, old and young, rich and poor, male and female. The selection for office was a very important one, and was expressed by a show of hands *χειροτονέω* (Acts xiv. 23 ; 2 Cor. viii. 19). Elders and deacons were thus selected by popular vote. The laying on of hands followed by the Presbytery being the recognition of those already in service. This is the only ordination met with in the New Testament. Nothing else was known and nothing else would be valid. It had the advantage of precedent in the Jewish Church. It had the advantage of express injunction in the Christian Church. It had the authority of God and approval of Christ's Apostles.

There was no separate order of overseers or bishops ; but when in the great revolutionary changes effected by Constantine, bishops came to be appointed, the next outrage on the original constitution of the Church took place. The Presbytery was deprived of the right of ordination, and the prerogative was placed in the hands of the bishop, with that of the administration of sacraments of baptism and the eucharist ; and the government of prelates began. Presbyterianism was in force from the inauguration of the Church on the day of Pentecost till then. The government was in the hands of presbyters. When the empire was broken up into dioceses and a bishop appointed to each, then Prelacy became the government of the Church. The government was then placed in the hands of bishops or prelates with a gradation of clergy up to the highest, and ultimately the Pope.

No Mystery in Ordination.—In the primitive days of the Church there was nothing mysterious in ordination. It was the simple appointment to office by the imposition of hands. There was no miraculous change of character, no imparting of any supernatural gift, no transformation of men into something higher or holier. Individuals were merely introduced to office and to work. We are not to suppose that an appointment to a diocese, carried anything more spiritual with it. At the emperor's initiation an aristocratic guild of diocesan prelates was created to suit the new order of circumstances. It was considered a wise arrangement by many, advantageous to the Church, and conducive to the good and easier government of the empire. Dioceses were formed to suit the gradations of the officials now introduced. It came to be believed that imposition of hands by a bishop conveyed some mysterious character, and that in baptism, confirmation, or orders, the fingers of a bishop had an extraordinary effect, and left an indelible mark. Dr Bruno states extravagantly in "Catholic Belief," p. 98, what this meant: "A certain dedication of the soul is made, leaving a mark for ever on the soul. The mark was called a character never to be effaced. Hence this sacrament can only be received once." This was the effect of confirmation, the imparting of the sevenfold graces of the Holy Spirit mentioned in Isa. xi. 2. These graces were further detailed as wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and the fear of the Lord. But these are the gifts predicted to distinguish "the rod out of the stem of Jesse." They were never declared to be at man's command for indiscriminate use. Sacerdotalists surround themselves with mystery where none exists. They assume

some hidden mesmeric influence where no such power was ever known to be. The Apostles communicated a pentecostal blessing, but that died with them. For nineteen hundred years the Church has been left to do without it.

Presbyters Ordained.—Originally it was presbyters who ordained, and they have the same right still. There is no mystery. A man was converted by the Holy Spirit and by his belief in Jesus Christ. That was prior to any application for ordination. No one ever ordained was ever conscious of any transformation by it. It is the universal experience that where ordination is administered in the most approved fashion, men pass through the service without any change. There is no miraculous gift of tongues, no special illumination, no increase of holiness, no suppression of passion, no intellectual or moral bestowment. The fool remains a fool, and the coward is just what he was before consecration. The selfish, haughty worldling is the same after ordination, be it from presbyter or prelate. The imposition of hands will produce no more change on heads than if they were stone, and all the hands in the Church cannot change iron or brass into the silver and gold of human character. There may be the designation to office, but spiritual ministerial qualifications depend on a man's use of ordinary means, application to duty, study of the Word, much prayer and the Holy Ghost. All this is within the reach of every diligent consecrated man. He gets the fire of the Holy Spirit where Isaiah got it, in the Holy of Holies, alone with God. The ordination of the prelate is not a whit more effectual than that of the Presbytery. There is this advantage, that the ordination of the Presbytery is recognised in Scripture,

while that of the prelate is never mentioned. Cases abound in Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches of unconverted men ordained to the ministry, and for years performing all the duties, and, by their manner of handling the Gospel, revealing that painful fact to all who hear them, like an unskilled artisan constantly revealing himself by the use of his tools; so a minister will show his unacquaintance with God. Dr Chalmers will occur to many. Baptised, reared in Christian influence, and ordained, he laboured like R.C. priest at dead doctrines without effect. What was awanting, ordination never could supply. Taught by the Holy Ghost, he came to preach in such a way, as to awaken Scotland to evangelic life.

CHAPTER XXVIII

APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

AN important matter in the claims of Sacerdotalists, named Apostolic Succession, now requires careful treatment. It is the succession of men ordained by Apostles, and forming a legitimate descent afterwards. The theory has from time to time been pressed, but more persistently by the Anglo-Catholics in the English Church than before. The extravagant assumptions of this section have led the successors of the presbyters to stand by the evangelic, pentecostal succession more steadfastly. It may be worth our trouble to consider this matter, as far as our space permits.

We must never forget that the Church of the New Testament was entirely through Christ. The creator

of the Church was by the Holy Ghost. Without father or mother, like Melchizedek, every soul enters the Church alone, by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. The grace of God is incommunicable from one to another. There must be a personal dealing with God, every man for himself. There is no man-made easy religion that is worth the trouble of putting on. The King of Heaven selects all His subjects, one by one. No one is refused who desires it. But God reserves all His grace in His own hands. There is not a single instance of the grace of God passing along a chain of hands to a series of heads, like some material electric current along a copper wire, at any man's pleasure. People who talk in this way are unacquainted with the gracious operations of God. Timothy's mother and grandmother were both genuine Christians, and Timothy became a Christian; but it was not by succession or heredity. In his case as in that of every other, it was by the distinct agency of the Holy Ghost. There is no hereditary grace or transmissible unction from parent to child, from teacher to pupil, or from master to servant.

Ministerial Grace.—It may be said, did not Paul urge Timothy to stir up the gift of God which he had through the Presbytery? It would appear that, as sober theologians say, hands were twice laid on Timothy, once by the Presbytery at his ordination. "Neglect not the gift," says Paul, "that is in thee which was given thee by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery" (1 Tim. iv. 14). That was unquestionably the gift of office, to which he was ordained by the presbyters, that of deacon or evangelist. That was all the Presbytery could give. But there was

also besides something miraculous, which apostles alone could confer by the imposition of hands, the pentecostal blessing (2 Tim. i. 6), some special gift, like that of tongues or healing, in every way of great service, to give testimony to the young man's work in heathen communities, or among questioning, critical people. Sacerdotalists urge that it was only once this was done to Timothy, Paul performing the act, the Presbytery consenting. But we must notice that the action of the Presbytery was simple designation, whereas Paul's action conveyed a miraculous gift, two very different things. "Neglect not the gift that is in thee" is equivalent to the words used elsewhere, "Make full proof of thy ministry."

A similar case is related of Samaria. Philip the deacon preached there, and many received the truth and were baptised. There was no baptismal regeneration there; baptism took place after they believed. Peter and John then went down to the city, prayed for the new converts, and laid their hands on them, and they received the miraculous gift of the Holy Ghost. But nowhere is it said that saving grace could be communicated from the tips of one man's fingers to another man's head. The Spirit alone can bestow ministerial grace, and this is after much prayer. The miraculous effects of confirmation claimed by sacerdotalists have no existence in facts, nor is there any mystery in ordination. It is only the assertion of interested parties, for this manufactory of Christian ministers by Episcopal fingers, which carries its own refutation.

How were Superior Officials first Produced?—It is not irreverence; but the question will arise, when and how were bishops first produced for subsequent use in the

Church? There is no trace of a beginning of a special order of bishops in the New Testament. It could not have been commenced by Apostles, though, like other things, it is fathered on Apostles, and called "Apostolic Succession." The Apostles only ordained presbyters or "elders" in every city. The system which was originated by the Apostles was perfect, containing all provision for the divine intentions. The Presbyters "overseed" their own congregations, the Presbyteries "overseed" the pastors, but a novelty was introduced by the creation of a special official who would, like a little despot, "oversee" the presbyters. The setting up of this superior "overseer" was considered "a great convenience," as Dr Cave says, but it involved the interference with a great principle laid down by Christ in the equality of the presbyters. "One is your master, all ye are brethren." The Apostles never ordained these superior "overseers" or bishops. From the beginning they opposed this conception. They were themselves "elders," as we have seen. They had no experience in this "overseeing" work of bishops. From their constant mission journeys they could not have experience of what overseeing or ruling meant. John was an elder, and Peter was an elder, and Paul, and they sought no higher place. If they saw it was required they would have given effect to the ordination of bishops. They did not countenance the idea, and ordained elders only. Then how was the first superior bishop got? Who ordained him, who laid hands on this higher official, and began this superior order? It was altogether irregular. We hear nothing about it, and it could not have any sanction from those who had authority in the Church.

For two hundred or two hundred and fifty years there were many bishops, several in every congregation, as at Philippi—congregational bishops in hundreds over the Church—but not one diocesan bishop in the modern sense. There is not a word in the New Testament, about the Apostles ordaining one superior bishop, to exercise superior rule or oversight in his own right or name. Diotrophes sought the pre-eminence of bishop, and had in consequence the withering memorial of 3 John 9. When so important a change as the introduction of a superior order of officials, and so far a disturbance of the elements which God arranged for the good of the world, and the social benefit of mankind, one would expect some marks of confirmation with the record of the fact of so revolutionary a change. But we look in vain for a single word of commendation, only the man, who was forcing himself into honour to gratify his ambition, has this denunciation from the last of the Apostles, John the beloved: "Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words; and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. Beloved, follow not that which is evil; but that which is good. He that doeth good is God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God" (3 John 10, 11).

It may be said, even though the origin of the superior clergy cannot be traced, of what consequence is it, if it be for the good of the world? That is just the question. In the one case there is the parity of presbyters, and the brotherhood responsible to a living, ever-present Christ,

and the Divine conception of the social influence such men would exert for the good of the race. In the other case the institution of superior, aristocratic rulers, to occupy the position of ecclesiastical princes to rule the clergy, with the loss of the social influence among mankind. What advantage will one prelate exercise over a million of people? Whereas the presbyter is a father among his congregation, the friend of every household. Already there is sound of social troubles rising in thunder at our gates, for the lack of the sanctifying and elevating influence of the Church on Christ's primitive lines.

The change not from God.—The introduction of superior orders cannot be from God, for it is followed by unchristian fruit in pride and intolerance. We have strange samples of this worldly spirit in unchurching other Churches. We have for instance "Father" Gace's notorious catechism, published not in the dark ages, but in 1899, "for the use of families and schools," breathing all the bigotry and fanaticism of mediæval times.

The following quotations will indicate its character. Among some of the grossest doctrines of the Papacy the following questions and answers occur:—

Question. What are those persons said to be who have rightly received Baptism?

Answer. They are said to be "born again" or to be "regenerate."

Q. You said that the Church is governed according to the Apostles' institution, by Bishops, Priests, and Deacons; what pretension, then, has the *Church* of Scotland, as it is popularly called, to be considered a Church at all, seeing that it rejects the order of Bishops, retaining only the orders of Priests and Deacons?

A. It is the Church which is established by law, and, therefore, it is regarded by the *State* as a true Church. Its distinctive title, however, is "the Presbyterian Church of Scotland," or "the Kirk," and is not, in reality, the *Church* of Scotland.

Q. Is not the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, as it is denominated by law, considered by the Church as one of its branches?

A. No ; and therefore there is a branch of the true Church of Christ which, for the sake of distinction, is called the Episcopal Church.

Q. We have amongst us various sects and denominations, who go by the general name of dissenters. In what light are we to consider them?

A. As heretics ; and in our Litany we expressly pray to be delivered from the sins of false doctrine, heresy, and schism.

Q. Is, then, their worship a laudable service?

A. No ; because they worship God according to their own evil and corrupt imaginations, and not according to His revealed will, therefore their worship is idolatrous.

Q. But why have not Dissenters been excommunicated?

A. Because the law of the land does not allow the wholesome law of the Church to be acted upon. . . . They have fallen from the unity of the Church Catholic, and, consequently, are not in a state of salvation.

Q. But are there not some Dissenters who use the same form of prayers as ourselves?

A. Doubtless ; but the prayers of the Church being, for the most part, for the priest to offer up on behalf of the people, it must be sinful and presumptuous for those persons who are called dissenting teachers to address the throne of grace, usurping the priestly office.

Q. Is it wicked, then, to enter a meeting-house at all?

A. Most assuredly, because, as was said above, it is a house where God is worshipped otherwise than He has commanded.

Q. In what light are we to regard Roman Catholics?

A. These are in different case from "Protestant Dissenters." The Roman Church is a true branch of the Catholic Church, but as the Church of England already exists in this country, . . . the Roman Catholics, by having distinct Churches, are schismatics, setting up altar against altar, and are, therefore, to be discountenanced and re-proved ("Gace's Catechism." London : Walter Smith & Innes. 12th Edition, 1899).

It is said that this disgraceful production is out of shame (1902) withdrawn from circulation ; but it still exists, and is said to be open for extracts for those who are interested in such bigotry, but "on condition that when the extracts

have served their use they may be destroyed." But the author who could put such words together, and the people who delight in them, show little of the gracious religion of the New Testament. The words may be withdrawn, but the persecuting spirit which dictated them has still to be repressed by the strong arm of British law, "which will not allow the *wholesome* law of the Church to be acted on." That was the law which our fathers knew in the form of fines, thumbscrews, imprisonment, and death. The longing to enforce it is an odious thing in a Christian.

Tracts for the Times.—Father Gace's catechism is concealed, but the "Tracts for the Times" remain breathing the same intolerance and bigotry, the Koran of Ritualists, the great fountain which Newman and Pusey dug for the anglo-catholic revival to pollute the Gospel and to deface the evangelical doctrine of the Church of England. For extravagance of statement, for assumption and bigotry, they stand unequalled in the literature of any age. It is sure to be that when a majority are prepared in this land, to avow these sentiments the most violent persecution will break forth. As it was in our fathers' days, men who cannot bear the truth will run every opposition to the earth. They are avowedly written with the object of strengthening the Church of England and weakening dissent, "and preparing for days when the Church will be in danger." A quotation or two will best show the spirit which they breathe. "The Bishops of the Church of England, and they only, are the representatives by succession of those who more than 1000 years ago planted the Gospel on these shores" (Tract No. 30, p. 4). This is contrary to fact.

The Gospel was on our shores more than 1000 years ago, and long before sacerdotalism had a being. "In primitive times it was planted here by Presbyters," Bishop Skinner admits. "It was the bishops and clergy themselves who maintained the just rights of the Church. There is not a word in Scripture about our duty to obey the pope" (No. 20, p. 5). Substitute the word prelate for the word pope in these sentences, and they exhibit one of the chief grounds of non-conformity on the part of those who differ from the Church of England, in so far as the form of prelatic government is concerned. In both cases the argument is founded on the same principle. Episcopalians, they say, threw off the usurped power of the pope, and renewed or resumed the inalienable rights of bishops, and the Reformed Churches threw off the usurped power of prelates, and renewed or resumed the inalienable rights of presbyters or pastors, and in either instance on the same ground that the usurpation was not sanctioned by Scripture.

Tract 36 describes the various sections of British Christianity which these tracts proceed to unchurch. "They are divided into three classes: (1) Those who reject the truth, Socinians, Jews, Deists and Atheists. (2) Those who receive part of the truth, but not all, rejecting fundamental doctrines. Among these are Presbyterians who maintain the validity of ordination by *Presbyters*, dispensing with that of bishops. *Independents* opposed to all government, and Methodists." These three do not receive the "laying on of hands" which St Paul classes among "the fundamental doctrines of Christianity"; and (3) Those who teach more than the truth, including Romanists, etc. Then follows an appeal. "Churchman! whosoever thou art,

that readest the list of follies and errors in the second and third classes, into which the pride of man's heart and the wiles of Satan have beguiled so many, first give to God your hearty thanks, for having preserved you a member of the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, which teaches the way of God in truth, neither 'handling the word of God deceitfully' like the *second class*, nor 'following cunningly devised fables,' like the third." Modest people they are ! Their words will at once remind the reader of the self-adulation of the old Pharisee of the Temple. "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are or even as this publican" (Luke xviii. 11). I belong to the one Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church of England, and I am not a Presbyterian nor a Methodist. The assumption, the arrogance and bigotry of Newman and the set which started anglo-catholicism, require no answer. Very modestly and meekly they proceed to state—"from each of these three classes, the Church of England has undergone persecution." Do these modest men imagine that they can shut up the records of the past, within the walls of the University of Oxford, and that they can let it out in snatches, and coloured to suit their spirit? Then let them know, that Scotland has a terrible indictment, against the black^d prelacy of the seventeenth century. She has preserved a record of 18,000 precious souls, men and women, who were done to death, from 1661 to 1688, for the love to Christ and His Gospel, till the power of British law in the hands of a Protestant, more merciful than the one Holy, Catholic Church of England, arrested this waste of life. The prelatic party has left its record on the moors of Scotland, and written with blood, a history of remorseless cruelty,

which Scotsmen over the globe will never suffer to die.

Another quotation will throw some light on their relation to the Church of Rome, with regard to Protestant Churches whose fathers suffered two hundred and fifty years ago. "Whatever," they say, "may be our private differences with the Roman Catholics, we may *join with them in* condemning Socinians, Baptists, Independents, Quakers and the like. But God forbid that we should ally ourselves with the *offspring of heresy and schism*, in our contest with *any* of the branches of the Holy Church which maintain the foundation, whatever may be their incidental corruptions" (Record No. 25, p. 9). The blackest corruptions of the papacy are nothing in comparison to their possession of a reputed, apostolic descent. "Of the Church of Scotland," they say, "ever since the Revolution in 1688 it has been altogether Presbyterian, and allowing the many good parts of her system (which, be it observed, *are all in a primitive spirit*), yet we may be permitted to observe that something naturally must be ascribed to the vicinity of our own church diffusing a kind of wholesome contagion!" Extremely modest! but one wonders where it is that this benefit has accrued to Scotland from vicinity to English prelacy. Of this, however, something later on. But neither "the many good parts of her system" nor her avowed "primitive spirit," nor her acknowledged orthodoxy can avail for her defence—one damning spot remains—the want of Episcopal orders, and hence the validity of her ministry, nay, the very efficacy of her sacraments, must be called in question. Her pastors are likened to Korah, and she herself is described as Samaria. "The Presbyterian ministers," they affirm,

“have assumed a power which was never entrusted to them. They have presumed to exercise the power of ordination, and to perpetuate a *succession of ministers*, without having received a commission to do so. This is the plain fact that *condemns* them, and is a standing condemnation from which they cannot escape, except by artifices of argument which will serve equally to protect the *self authorised* teacher of religion” (No. 7, p. 2). It was the Presbyters alone in the beginning who had this authority of ordination conferred on them, and Christ never cancelled His gift, and it remains, only where Christ placed it with Presbyters.

The Crown of Arrogance.—Sacerdotalists say that those who have received their commission from bishops can claim that “Christ has promised to remain with them, and what they do on earth will be ratified in heaven.” But a person not commissioned by a bishop has no promise. He may *pretend* to administer a sacrament, but there will be no blessing. All this is in evidence of being filled with Holy Ghost, and is the fruit of the spirit! Poor Scotland! She has been blessed for hundreds of years with the pure Gospel, and the administration of sacraments, by men ordained after Bible instructions. There have been men renowned for learning and culture and piety second to none on the earth. The ministrations of grace, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, have produced a pious seed, and the sons of Scotland have gone forth to take leading places among all the inhabitants of the globe. God has not withheld from her the dews of heaven’s blessing, but has showered these abundantly on the people who have walked according to the Bible, and the Bible alone, and humbly maintained the principles of the Church of the New

Testament. It would be the vilest ingratitude, and the basest unbelief to doubt for a moment, that all she has she owes it wholly to the blessing of God, resting on her for the way she has held fast to the original trust. But surely there is something grotesque in a section of prelatists, stripping themselves of every vestige of the original constitution of the Church of Christ, breaking off from all continuity in service, doctrine, and form of worship of their own Episcopal communion even, and having the effrontery to exclaim:—The Church of Christ, the Church of Christ are we! and with rebukes and aspersions of the cruellest persecuting days, throwing contempt on those who walk humbly in obedience to God. These maligned men have something better than a fictitious apostolic succession. They have the commission of God for their presbyterate, in the divine command to “ordain elders in every city,” and the establishment “of Presbyteries for the ordination of successors,” and the permanency of their primitive system. They have besides in the founders of their own national church, John Knox, John Craig, and the other ordained reformers, as genuine an ordination as the founders of the Prelatic Church ever had in any age. It is surely something grotesque to see men like “father” Gace playing the buffoon in sacred matters, before the Bible and the light of the age and the facts of history, and before common sense, to the great grief of the members of the Church of England. We have shown the teaching to be that of the Oxford School, who, dreading overthrow before the rising intelligence of the day which hates shams, are endeavouring to perpetuate a priestcraft for a little longer, which is being found out, and discounted in every land under heaven.

Seventy years from the start of the Oxford school in 1833 is a long time for the fiction to get ahead of a truth, and the proclamation of the reality has been following hard ever since, to expose Anglo-Catholic fables. But an error takes a long time to die, and this is sure to go like others, very much to the discomfiture of those who are building it up against an evil day of reckoning, when all the hollow priestcrafts of the ages, are sure to collapse.

The late Bishop of Oxford said: "I can trace my pedigree right up to the Apostles in an unbroken line. Archbishop Whately, who was immensely his superior in logic and candour, said ("Kingdom of Christ," p. 175): "There is not a minister in all Christendom who is able to trace up with any approach to certainty his own pedigree." A bishop asserts the reality of his personal Apostolic succession, and an archbishop denounces the assumption, as having no reliable foundation whatever.

An example of the inflated spirit of sacerdotalism we have in Bishop Gore's "Church and Ministry," 1893. In that book he does not hesitate to publish his adherence, to some of the worst features of the arrogance and bigotry of the school he follows. In the New Testament he reads of the ordination of presbyters and deacons and nothing else; but he shuts his eyes to this fact and reads nothing but the ordination of bishops, and he cannot put his finger on one case in Scripture, of the consecration of a bishop as such.

On pages 101 and 102 he speaks of the checks originally existing in communities for centuries. These are rather unfortunate admissions for his own appointment, when so many respectable societies and sections of his own Church

opposed his own enthronement. He borrows the whole question when he asserts "a three-fold ministry, consisting of a bishop in each community or *diocese*! with presbyters and deacons, the bishop alone having the power of ordaining or conferring ministerial authority" (p. 73). That is without authority. No doubt it developed to this after three hundred years' experience of the presbyterate; but he adduces no authority for the change. It was contrary to Scripture. With all the narrowness of the most obscure of his party, he says: "A ministry not episcopally received is invalid, that is to say, falls outside the conditions of uncovenanted security, and cannot justify its existence in terms of the covenant" ("Ministry of the Christian Church," 344, 345).

Where, we ask, is *this covenant* to be seen, fondly mentioned in Prelatic circles, and only known to sacerdotalists? What are the uncovenanted mercies to which they make such easy reference and to which Bishop Gore and "father" Gace, in their great compassion, leave reprobate sinners like Presbyterians and Wesleyans. We know of a new covenant proclaimed of old in Jeremiah xxxi. 33, 34: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their god, and they shall be my people. . . . They shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." This is the covenant which God keeps with all who accept Jesus Christ and trust in the mercy of God, a covenant, great, glorious, majestic, like God. Sacerdotal restrictions are bound to be torn to tatters and flung to the ground, as demeaning to God and His Gospel. He deliberately states

that Waldensians and Wesleyans are outside of this covenant! It is well his hand does not reach to heaven.

With the rest of his sect he has to invent a daily miracle to save the immoralities of his succession—that bad men can impart spiritual gifts to others. Has God ever given a single word to lead men to believe that He could ever use unclean men to spread His Kingdom? God has been very particular about the agents he employed. Bishop Gore with his succession would ask us to believe that in the Christian Church all this is changed. The history of the popes, through whom his succession comes, is in most cases the blackest record of immorality and crime that was ever penned, men who were monsters of iniquity and a degradation to ordinary humanity. Some of them were poor but weak men, others were giants in guilt. It is only necessary to mention the Borgias, Pius II., and hundreds of others, or such men as blessed Philip of Spain, and gave thanks for the massacre of St Bartholomew, who smiled on the inquisition, and made the valleys of Piedmont run with Waldensian blood. To ask us to believe that a God of purity and righteousness can be in alliance with iniquity, or transmit His goodness through the most reprobate of the human race, Canon Gore surrenders his judgment and his reason, to support so depraved a theory. Another difficulty is even greater, that God's highest grace went through these monsters of guilt and it never produced a change in them, but in individuals later on in the chain, it produced effects greater than the lightning.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE HISTORIC EPISCOPATE

GREAT stress is laid on what is called the "Historic Episcopate" in prelatie circles, Romish and Anglo-Catholic, that is, the development of the episcopate on historical lines.

Putting aside the fact that the Apostles ordained elders in every city, and gave instructions to Timothy and Titus their delegates to do the same, the presbyters or the presbytery of each community were constituted the legal body to ordain new officials as these were required. It is curious to study how this simple origin is treated by the prelatie ritualistic party. We have seen how the late Bishop of Oxford regarded it, and how the Archbishop of Dublin scouted it. Some trace all their continuity to Peter, and others reject the corrupt line of Rome, and trace it all to Paul. Newman says (Tract xx. 3): "It is a miracle that the Christians in England escaped the evil day of both extremes, that of being doctrinally corrupted by being under the pope, and of being ecclesiastically secularised, by joining a spontaneous union among themselves." The sublime contempt which Newman shows for all the facts of history in this statement is highly amusing. The ordination by presbyteries must have been common for many years. The Presbytery of Lystra it would seem ordained Timothy after his circumcision (Acts xvi. 2, 3; 1 Tim. iv. 14). The Presbytery of Antioch consecrated. Elders were ordained in Rome and Jerusalem in the most valid manner. Paul and Barnabas were consecrated for a special mission (Acts xiii. 3),

besides the Presbytery of Ephesus, and Derbe, and Philippi. We shall see afterwards that the brethren in Iona in Scotland did the same thing, and no one ever questioned their action, and the ordination of presbyters furnished the prerogative of the corporate body of the presbyterate for all their action. The function was always equally valid. There was not an instance of Episcopal ordination in the primitive practice of the New Testament Church. Ordination by the presbytery is mentioned, and nothing else was known.

It is somewhat strange how easily Ritualists set this aside, and how Newman would run away from Rome's influence, while he claims Rome alone for his succession. It seems that Rome came into great prominence in very early times, but who was the founder of the Church there is unknown. It is very certain it was not an Apostle, for the faith of the Christians there, was noised abroad for a long period for Christian character and brotherly service. Paul certifies to the fact, A.D. 60. Very probably the strangers of Rome who were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost caught the evangelical fire early, and after seeing how the Apostles proceeded to constitute a church, they returned to their own city, authorised to do the same. Relating to their fellow citizens the tidings of their marvellous experience, the story of the Gospel had its invariable effect on the paganism of Rome. There arose a noble band of devoted Christians there, to whose labours the Church owed all things. The fiercest persecutions only added strength and vigour to the cause. Tacitus says (Ann. xx. 44) that they were "a vast number" in the days of Nero. Twenty-seven years after the planting of the Church, when Paul wrote to them they had no bishops, but at an early date the

Church took vigorous form, after the approved and well known model which was seen in Jerusalem. There were presbyters ordained as in other churches, with no appearance of a bishop. Presbyters (elders) were the rule in every church.

The Church in Rome acquired great influence for the many proofs of strong consistent Christian life, and the liberal way in which it succoured all those who were in distress. It gave a noble example to others of firmness, in bearing the heaviest persecutions. This was another example of the noble work the primitive churches were fulfilling, which were true to the divine intention, and in the centre of the Roman empire must have contributed much to the extension of the Christian faith, and to the well deserved good name, which Paul mentions: "I thank my God that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world" (i. 8). "Your obedience is come abroad unto all men" (xvi. 19). "I am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another" (xv. 14). Rome thus attained to pre-eminence among the churches, from the earnestness and zeal of the whole brotherhood. Victor in A.D. 189-199 was the first to claim authority for himself apart from his Church, and gave the sample of a demand like universal dominion in connection with the Easter question, and cut off the Eastern churches for a want of compliance to his decision. Till that time Eusebius speaks of the Presbyters of Rome. In 199 he was succeeded by a weak and foolish man, Zephyrinus, and in 218 by Callistus, who first formulated the theory of Apostolic succession, and laid claim to the power of for-

giving sins. This was advanced further by Cyprian of Carthage. Here appears the curiosities of the historic Episcopate. The Bishop of Oxford could trace his pedigree to the Apostles. But it is impossible to say who succeeded the Apostles. Whether it is Clement, or Linus, or Cletus, or Anacletus, the succession is in hopeless confusion. Bishop Stillingfleet says "The succession is as muddy as the Tiber itself"; but to the Bishop of Oxford it is clear.

Historical Facts.—A few plain facts accessible to all men, and irrefutable, will show that Rome shaped most of their history, and for several centuries, after arresting the influence of the native British Church, planted the hierarchy in England. "In A.D. 668 Theodore was Archbishop of Canterbury. He was prelate for twenty-two years, and was consecrated in Rome by Pope Vitalian. Northelm was Archbishop of Canterbury in 735, and he was consecrated by Pope Gregory III. at Rome. Lambert, Archbishop of Canterbury in 763, was consecrated at Rome by Pope Paul I., and he ordained for twenty-seven years. Plegmund was Archbishop of Canterbury in 891, exercised his prelatic authority for twenty-six years, and was consecrated at Rome by Pope Formosus. Now this Pope Formosus was succeeded by Pope Stephen VI., who declared all his ordinations to be null and void; and yet Plegmund, the Archbishop of Canterbury, whose ordination was declared void by Pope Stephen, spread his abortive ordinations throughout England for twenty-six years. Not to mention more, Angelnoth, Theobald, Richard, Stephen, Langton and Boniface, successively archbishops for ninety-six years, had Romish consecration and ordained other bishops.

Chichley, in 1414, received orders from Pope Gregory XII. But the Council of Constance declared Gregory neither pope nor bishop! So far for the See of Canterbury.

“That of York has an equally imperfect bill. From 1119 to 1342 there were twelve archbishops in 223 years all consecrated directly or indirectly by popes. From 1133 to 1345 there were nine bishops in Durham consecrated by popes for 212 years. How the writer of Tract xx. can endeavour to convince men that the English prelates were clear of the contamination of Rome must arise from ignorance or from a shameless historical fraud” (Mellor 64). There is scarcely one way in which that succession can be conceived as broken in which it has not in fact been broken. Does it nullify orders that a man is unbaptised? There have been bishops unbaptised. Does under-age nullify orders? There have been boy popes. Does heresy break the continuity? Many popes have been heretical. Does the foulest criminality or the blackest morals break the connection? Bishop Gore says no, to support an unnatural and an unholy theory! The writer of Tract xx. says we were never under the pope! Then what does history say for hundreds of years? And what is the meaning and the necessity of the expression which has rung through England since the Reformation: “The bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction of this realm of England”? We have not lost our reason, though ritualists seem to think so, by imposing on us such assertions, that the English Episcopate had no connection with Rome. All the taint of the Roman medium they must accept.

They do not appeal to Scripture for their claims for their

historic Episcopate, for the Bible is a thoroughly Protestant book from beginning to end. They do not go to the Apostles for precedents, for their Episcopate was never dreamt of in the days of the Apostles. The conversion of Constantine precipitated the inclination to a change of polity. The power of the Church, it was seen, could be made subservient to the power of the State, and alliances began to be effected where ambitious men were tempted, as we have seen, to introduce new elements.

The result was to assimilate the Church to the Empire, in new ideas and methods as well as in gradations of dignities. The imperialist temper of Rome soon moulded the institutions of Christendom and gave new characteristics to the Church. When it became common that nations had to enter the Church, as it were, by the beat of a drum, pagan methods were introduced to make the people believe, that Christianity was not very different from paganism which was in name at least abandoned. It was in those days that the priest was introduced, and the absorption of the heathen, with all their pagan customs, became common throughout the Church, instead of conversion by the Holy Ghost. As the Church extended there came a new government in the hierarchy, and the empire supplied the model instead of the humble synagogue. The presiding presbyter was constituted a bishop, to oversee not only his congregation but his colleague-elders. Several congregations and presbyteries were next added, and so Diocesan Episcopacy, as it was called, made its appearance in the fourth century, and Christianity emerged out of Diocletian's persecution to be the national religion of the Empire.

The Introduction of the Hierarchy.—The change is de-

scribed by Elliot, page 413. With the Emperor, patron of the Church, the Empire was now divided into thirteen Dioceses by Constantine, and these contained 120 provinces, and every province had several cities. As there was in every city a civil magistrate for the execution of justice and the keeping of the peace, both in the city and towns round about, so there came to be a bishop for spiritual government, whose jurisdiction was of a similar extent. In every province there was a proconsul or president, whose seat was at the chief city, and hither all the inferior cities came for judgment, so there came to be an Archbishop or Metropolitan for ecclesiastical government. For all causes not determinable elsewhere, there came to be the vicar of the Emperor, and this was initiated in the patriarchs of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. Thus it came that the hierarchy was introduced with diocesan Bishops, Archbishops, Metropolitans, Primates, Patriarchs, and finally Popes. The system of government by priests followed, to displace the simple presbyters, and the Church became wholly a kingdom of this world.

At the beginning the wisdom of the Apostles was conspicuous, in the provision made for the administration of the Church in spiritual things. It secured the preaching of the Word as the main agent for the conversion of the world, the assembling of the people on the Sabbath for the worship of God, the reading of Scripture, and the offering to God of public prayer and thanksgiving. Rule and government in spiritual interests were secured in the presbytery of elders. With this simple arrangement the Church's progress was marvellous. Persecution and the fiercest hostility could not arrest the movement. All this was overthrown by the

introduction of the hierarchy. Deacons and Presbyters were subordinated to Bishops. Bishops to their immediate Metropolitans, Metropolitans to their respective Primates or Patriarchs, and so provision was made for the government of the empire, which soon rivalled the government of Cæsar. But Dr Cave owns "it was a purely human contrivance," and no man in his senses could deny it. It served notably for the ambitions of aspiring clergymen, which ended in the submission of the world to the Bishop of Rome. Then it was that pagan ritual came in like a flood. "When the Church had Christian magistrates," says Jerome, "she was fuller of riches, but emptier of virtue, and gave good reason for the severe rebuke, that when the Church had golden chalices it had wooden priests." In theory all its offices were said to be divinely appointed, but it is very difficult to see where that came in. "My kingdom is not of this world," was the original character of the institution, but it came to be wholly of this world in its spirit and practice, and it was very difficult to distinguish where divine authority and apostolic descent could have any place. In 337 A.D. the hierarchy was fully established. In the fifth century Socrates remarks "that the Episcopate of the Romans, like that of the Alexandrines, had far advanced beyond the limits proper to the priesthood, to the point of despotism" (H.E. vii. 11).

Ambition without a limit. Prelacy entered a region of ambition to which there was no limit. Even Gore admits "that in the altered circumstances, the authority of kings and popes overwhelmed the democratic elements of the Christian polity ("Christian Ministry," 106). The evils which the Apostles dreaded in supremacy came to pass, and the

Church became entirely changed. Judging by the progress which was made in the first centuries, the whole earth should have been by this time converted to God. The new earth, the abode of righteousness and peace should have been inaugurated, had the divine intentions been followed as originally laid down, and the divine power used which God put at the Church's disposal. But it became poisoned through imperial favours. The Lord Bishops and Popes, instead of being "vigilant pastors of congregations, preaching and praying, teaching from house to house, serving the Lord with all humility and tears," fought and quarrelled for dominating power. During ten persecutions it flourished like the palm tree. But under the patronage of earthly rulers it wallowed in the mire.

At the Reformation the Church of England emerged out of this corrupt region, and entered the evangelic element of the Reformed Churches, yet Newman says it was never "under Rome." The record of all history is that like other lands England was wholly Romish ; that not a single church in Reformed Christendom retained the prelatic system of Rome except the Church of England, and this was accomplished by a compromise. She adopted Evangelic doctrine three hundred years ago, but retained the system of corrupt Rome, which has been a snare and a trouble ever since.

CHAPTER XXX

APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION AND ITS IMPROBABILITIES

IN support of the theory of Historic Episcopate there have been invented some of the most absurd and irrational

assumptions ever contrived to impose on the credulity of men. The following are a few :—

1. That the grace of God is some material agency to be confined within certain well defined channels, some celestial ichor under the complete control of certain privileged persons called bishops, to be distributed along certain official lines and along no other. No proof is adduced for this revolutionary statement, but the *ipse dixit* of interested men.

2. That this dogma, entirely sacerdotal, invests a certain class of men with peculiar sanctity without any process of sanctification, clothing them with tremendous power for this world and the next, in which the whole human family is involved. That this is acquired and imparted on the imposition of the hands of those superior men called bishops.

3. That the character of the conductors of this celestial ichor is of no consequence, that bad men can communicate this spiritual influence as well as the good, and bad men can be the recipients and distributors of it, without coming themselves under its sanctifying influence. "Thy money perish with thee," Peter said to the magician, Simon Magus, "because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter" (Acts viii. 20, 21). Peter clearly was not in the secret of modern sacerdotalists. He was an Apostle and only a Presbyter. He knew not how to communicate this mysterious power of modern Diocesan Bishops, for he did not belong to the class of Prelates.

4. That this ceremony of the laying on of hands has such marvellously miraculous power, that it can reach into

the soul and confer an indelible gracious character ; but it had no effect on the Borgias and other monsters of depravity in mediæval history in its progress.

5. That it is all the same a *truth* ! though it is contrary to experience. No one has ever known any benefit from it. Though it involves a violation of history, and reduces the common sense of men to the imbecility and superstition of children.

6. The Christian religion is the most majestic system of thought and experience ever revealed to man, but the inventions of priestcraft to defend themselves behind the walls of an imaginary divine succession, as the last shelter when State support can no longer be relied on, reduces it to the hugest superstition, doing violence to the reason, the experience of mankind and the revelation of God's mercy ; the weakest and the most erratic belief in supernatural agency ever promulgated among men.

Bishop Gore is well aware of these assumptions, and stands by them in support of his theory of the Historic Episcopate.

There must have been grave irregularities in breaking through the constitution established in the primitive church. There were originally Apostles, elders, deacons. The Apostles were elders ; this was the highest office among the permanent officials of the Church. Timothy was "a deacon," though he did besides the work of an evangelist (1 Thes. iii. 2., 2 Tim. iv. 5). Elders were for overseeing ; overseer was originally the name of the public officials in Greek communities, in watching the markets and superintending the victuals. Ignatius, Polycarp and Clement, who represent the churches, were ordained as presbyters,

and towards the end of the life of Ignatius the presiding presbyter of the congregation came to be designated by the name bishop. But "it was not lawful for the presbytery to do anything in the Church without the consent of the ruling presbyter, and the president or pastor could do nothing without the consent or counsel of his presbytery." That was the principle of Presbyterianism, not Prelacy. Cyprian, about 250 A.D., "*Opera Epistola*," v., says that in his day, "Bishops and Presbyters governed the Church"; but even yet there was no diocesan Episcopacy as we know it. While "*Epiphanius Oper.*" (Tom. 1), "*Adversus Haeres*," (Lib. 1) does not hesitate to say "that Presbyters are the successors of the Apostles."

There are very substantial reasons, however, to show that whatever claims to a historic Episcopate were put forward from time to time they were not much thought of till the rise of the Oxford movement. These are grave enough to lead men to say that it never had a legitimate beginning. The Apostles were not Diocesan bishops, and knew nothing of prelacy, for they dreaded and denounced anything like supremacy. They were simple presbyters; John, Peter and Paul declared themselves presbyters. Besides, the appointment of Lords or dignitaries in the New Testament Church went against the most sacred commands of Scripture in the institution of the Church. "One is your Master, even Christ," Jesus said; "all ye are brethren" (Matt. xxiii. 8); "neither as being Lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples of the flock" (1 Peter, v. 3). Anything to break the Brotherhood which God in His wisdom saw fit to establish could not be with His commendation. Besides, there was no agent authorised

to grant any ordination for any higher office than his own. Moberly speaks of a system of Episcopacy quite completely formulated and organised—distinctive title and all—under the immediate superintendence of John. But this was condemned to the close of his life by John, and the conduct of Diotrephes, who persisted in seeking the higher office, brought on him the severe rebuke of 3 John 9. The Apostles ordained elders everywhere to “oversee” the members of the Church, and to watch over the spiritual interests of the congregation. For that reason the elders were also called “overseers,” but they were the same men, and only congregational bishops or elders. But congregational elders or bishops could never ordain to a higher office than their own, and no presidents of their own could ever constitute a superior rank of bishops, who never thought themselves more than presiding presbyters, *primi inter pares*. This could only show that some illegal step was taken, that an unscriptural assumption had been practised, and which was based on an imaginary function, and the historic Episcopate was never legally begun. We live in a questioning critical age, and had the Oxford divines been satisfied with their own position very few would care to raise any opposition. But when they raise a crusade against the reformed churches, and condemn presbyterian orders and sacraments, neither in logic nor in charity must they be allowed to establish their own by dishonouring those, who believe they have a more Scriptural and a more accurate system, and a more reasonable position. On this ground we make free to examine the principles on which they seek to establish their exclusive Episcopate.

Ecclesiastical lists inaccurate.—As far as the pretended lists of bishops of the different churches from the Apostles' days, and exhibited by ecclesiastical writers is concerned, we must remember are most inaccurate, and are filled with forgeries and inventions of later times. Dr Bruno, for instance, says that in Rome there were Linus, Cletus, Clement, who succeeded Peter in this order. There is no historical certainty that Peter was ever in Rome. The invention of a report that he died there was only found after centuries. Some of the fathers say that Linus was the first bishop. But Bishop Pearson has proved that Linus died before Peter. Even Roman Catholic authors cannot say with any accuracy. Some say it was Cletus or Anacletus. Others declare it was Clement, who is mentioned in the Epistle to the Philippians iv. 3. There is no historical certainty for Clement, for he himself says he was the first. Eusebius, more honest than most, says: "It is very difficult to say who succeeded the Apostles."

Doctrine of intentions destroys certainty.—The succession further has had to contend with several other grave improbabilities. If the Romish dogma of intention is taken into account, it is impossible to say with any certainty that there is one genuine ordained bishop in any prelatic Church on the globe. Then there were repeated vacancies and interruptions, making the flow of the celestial ichor far more wonderful than Marconi's wireless telegraphy. Many of the popes were great heretics and unbelievers. Many of them were men of an infamously wicked character. What can be said of Boniface VIII. as a conductor of the grace of God, "the man who crept into the popedom like a fox, reigned like a lion, and died like a dog"? Such is

the true verdict of history on one who was a disgrace to humanity. Or what shall be said of Clement VI., Alexander III., Paschal and Hildebrand, many of them monsters of iniquity and pride ; or Pope Joan, the harlot? How can true successors of the Holy Ghost spring from such enormities? Or what shall we say of this grace of God passing through wicked men without leaving any deposit in themselves for their own sanctification, and then appearing in some successor after three or four generations. Such is the lamentable pass to which sacerdotalists are reduced, who, for the sake of their theory of historic Episcopate, will snatch at any support to their fatuous fancy, though it should drag the purity of God through the world's filth.

Illegalities increase Improbabilities. — There is another view of the Episcopate which detracts from the value of the same, by the light which history throws on reputed ordinations. Even if it had been legally in order, there has been such mixtures, and it has been so watered down as now to be useless. Prelatists of Romish and Anglican schools lay great stress on baptism. They say that without a proper baptism no man can be a Christian. "It remits all sins, it bestows sanctifying grace, it endues the soul with faith, hope and charity, and makes the recipient a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven." That is baptismal regeneration. The only regenerator of the soul of a sinner is the Holy Ghost ; but there is no need of any Holy Spirit in this case. The priest can make the sacrament effectual. Of such value is the sacrament in the estimation of the Romish Church, that a woman is authorised to baptise a dying child if no

priest is available, for without it no soul can enter heaven. Of course baptism by a Presbyterian is not legitimate, and is of no use, for he is no more than a layman and a heretic. But it so happens that many have entered both prelatie churches in England and Scotland, and have risen to distinction, who had no other than presbyterian baptism, and were not "christened." To mention only two at present—Butler and Secker. The former was the son of an English presbyterian tradesman, intended for a presbyterian minister, had been principally educated among dissenters, and was at last entered at Oxford. From his first preferment in the Church of England in 1718, to his consecration of Bishop of Bristol and then of Durham, where he died in 1752, he baptised and confirmed and ordained many, not one of which was genuine, and, lacking the true apostolic succession, not one of them was valid, and the consequences in the Church of England are awful to contemplate through this vicious intermixture. There was Secker, also the son of presbyterian parents and intended for a presbyterian minister, entered the Church of England and was never rebaptised. He enjoyed many preferments from 1723; he was consecrated Bishop of Bristol in 1735, of Oxford 1737, Dean of St Paul's 1750, Archbishop of Canterbury in 1758, and died in 1768. While primate of all England he baptised George III., yet he was never himself properly baptised. If apostolic succession is true it is fearful to contemplate all the mischief this pious man and famous preacher did in diluting the true succession. Then there was Archbishop Tillotson, the son of a baptist, was not baptised in his childhood, and there is good reason to believe that he firmly adopted their

opinions at Cambridge. He stood well in the opinion of Cromwell, and married his niece. Attracted by Chillingworth he entered the Church of England. The date and place of his ordination are quite unknown. There is a great probability that it was solemnised in private for some unknown reason. On his elevation to the primacy his very baptism was denied. His promotion in the Church of England was rapid. He was primate of all England for three years, and he died in 1694, aged 64 years. Without proper and unquestioned apostolic succession, the injury he must have done to the Church of England must have been incalculable. If this theory of the value of apostolic succession be correct, with all its consequences, it is lamentable to consider the state of England during the reign of George III., a pious and venerable monarch as all admit, and the head of the Church, and Archbishop Secker, the primate of the kingdom, when neither the reigning monarch nor right reverend prelate, could be Christians according to sacerdotal standards. Besides, the consequences are somewhat appalling when we consider that our late wise and saintly Queen Victoria, the revered lady of the globe, and her husband, Albert "the good," invited their relative, the great Emperor William, who was neither baptised by a bishop nor by a minister, ordained by a bishop, to stand as godfather to our popular King Edward VII. Not all the care of the best of parents in the subsequent training of their son can counteract this great indiscretion. The consequences involved in the assumptions of the Anglo-catholic and prelate sectaries are tremendous, and very much wider than their supporters imagine. The innumerable difficulties, improbabilities and

absurdities of this celestial ichor, and of this alleged historical Episcopate, with its proved unscripturalness, and its departure from the practises of the original ordination by presbyters, are too apparent for any thoughtful man to put any confidence in it. This superiority has no existence. It is a purely human expedient to aggrandise an ambitious sacerdotal confraternity, who lay much stress on the supposed virtues of succession to foster a superstitious awe, as a last resort for their profession, against apprehended calamities, instead of in the Lord God. But when the deception is found out it will have a very different effect on a deceived democracy (Brown of Langton).

The Reference to Rome Conclusive.—To the prelatists who believe “that succession is everything, and of more consequence than the form of ministry,” it is very natural to look around for advantageous alliances, and nothing more likely than to seek the friendly support of the other prelatist Church, that of Rome. Is it not their proud boast that they have sprung from Rome, and their cherished apostolic Episcopate includes that of the older institutions? It was very natural that the ritualistic bishops of the English Church should appeal to the pope for his friendly recognition of their orders. With a word from him they could face all the doubters, and sceptics, and critics of the age, and they approached the venerable old man with a feeling of hope. The approach was acknowledged as a great compliment to the Church of Rome, but the pope was in no haste to reply. The ablest theologians were consulted, weeks passed, and at length, in an Encyclical, June 1896, from the chair of “infallibility” the pope disallowed the validity of all orders not sanctioned by his own

Church. "Bishops are deprived of all right and power of ruling," he said, "if they deliberately secede from Peter and his successors, because of their secession they are separated from the foundation." "The Episcopal Order is a lawless and disorderly crowd (*multitudo confusa ac perturbata*)." In the Bull *Apostolicæ Curæ*, Sept. 1896, Leo XIII. showed that ordinations after the Anglican rite were null and void. Priests' assumption of sacerdotal power to change the elements of communion into the body and blood are of no avail, "for every word to that effect was carefully excluded from their ordinal, and this could not be assumed at their pleasure." Their orders, therefore, are judged invalid by the highest authority, who might have some right to speak on the subject. From the archbishop to the curate, they are all laymen in the opinion of the pope. Not all the advantage of an early union with Rome could tempt the pope to bend from his proud assumption, and, driven from his seat in disgrace, the prelatists could ill conceal their mortification and disappointment, in expressing the hope that perhaps some more liberal pope, in the plenitude of his power, could find out some method of reconciliation for future suppliants. Meantime they forget that the God whose word they set aside, and whose original arrangement they ignored, may find means of thwarting the hopes of those who put their trust in man and not in the Almighty. What then can be said of the historic Episcopate but that it never existed. It is the after thought of Newman and his friends. To its existence and pretensions must be traced the comparative failure of the Church of Christ.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE HISTORIC PRESBYTERATE AND ITS SUB-
STANTIAL FOUNDATIONS

WE have before our eyes the existence of vast companies of seriously minded men and women, called the Church of God, moved by a common impulse of reaching heaven at last, with the full intention of being guided by Scripture, and accepting nothing in polity or doctrine, in order or custom, but what the word of God prescribes or warrants. Before the Scripture every man must bow, and the word of God must bind every conscience. Notwithstanding the studied insults of recent English sacerdotalists, we shall avoid offence in considering what the New Testament says on the Presbyterate. According to them the Presbyterians have no place in the Universal or Catholic Church. They say, that at present the Eastern, the Roman, and the Anglican portions, make up the Catholic body. We repudiate this outrage. They are not the parties to decide who form the "Universal Church," for they are in open revolt from one another. God alone has the right to decide that question. While Presbyterians endeavour to walk as near as possible to Scripture, they can leave all else with confidence to God, knowing that He will not shut those out from His mercy, whose only desire is to follow His word alone. At no man's bidding shall we stand aside, where the joys of this life and the interests of the next world are concerned. No man's word shall we take for that of the Almighty in whom our souls rely.

The Formation of the Institution.—When Peter made his noble confession, “Thou art the Christ, the son of the Living God,” and when Christ replied, “Thou art Petros (a stone), and on this Petra (rock) will I build my Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it” (Matt. xvi. 18); he pledged His word before the universe for the safety of His church, and all the malice of hell, the craft and hatred of the wicked one, and the intolerance of selfish men have not been able to frustrate the great purposes of the Almighty. Fight against the supernatural as people may, there are four great outstanding miracles, which cannot be accounted for by ordinary means, the existence of the Jewish nation, their rich empty country, the preservation of an open Bible, and a living prosperous church, all awaiting the further development of God. Christ Himself was the “petra.” He was Himself the foundation, the founder, the builder, the defender of the Church. It was foretold that the gates of hell would not prevail against it; that did not promise infallibility but permanency. But while Christ is on His throne, the ages have given their testimony that the promise given nineteen centuries ago has been kept and will be to the end. In that short expression all the work was included which Christ saw to be necessary for the redemption and preservation of His Church. It embraces besides everything which Christ has done since, and will do till the great issue is concluded. They have the best right to that promise and all that is in it, who walk with God in His own words. All was undertaken and publicly proclaimed in those majestic words. Some say there is no Church now, that all is obliterated. That would be a curious result

in presence of the Eternal One, whose word is pledged for the Church's existence and permanency.

Now in the vindication of the Church we have nothing to do with the *jus divinum* of one church over another, for such a term is not in the Bible. We have nothing to do with Low Church, or Protestant Episcopacy, or with Wesleyanism or Independency, for all Protestant churches have much in common. All read the Bible for themselves, and everyone is responsible to his own Master. They have been brought up in their own churches, and are familiar with their own methods, and have had success in them. But when it comes to the reading of the Bible, and when Prelatists throw out a challenge to Presbyterians that they have no divinely recognised ministry, no valid ordinances, no sacraments, no covenanted grace, no valid church, Presbyterians shall stand by their own Church, and its Scriptural position, and while any anglo-catholic clergyman will throw the insult on the free churches by stating "that his coachman can administer a sacrament with as much right as a so-called Presbyterian or Independent minister," we throw back the insult, and declare that we cannot find in the Bible a word about Episcopate, or Episcopacy, but a great deal about the despised Presbyters and the Presbyterate. They claim that their ordination is the right one, but the Abbé Boudinhon shows that there are eight different forms of ordination for priests in existence, and eight for bishops as good as theirs, the old Roman, the old Gallican, Greek, Coptic, Maronite, Nestorian, Armenian, and that in the Apostolical Constitutions, all used and all authorised (Brown, Bedford, p. 55).

We look at the origin of the Church of the New Testa-

ment. Christ took twelve humble men very unsuitable for His purpose, a number of them fishermen, an unfortunate circumstance for those whose proud, aristocratic ideas lead them to despise the earthly calling of the majority of men. The twelve selected were, in the estimation of others, the most unsuitable for any work that would ever impress the world ; but the despised of their fellowmen became in the divine purpose the best, for it became conspicuous that "it was not by might, or by power, but by the spirit of the Lord." The Apostles began their work on the day of Pentecost, and with the first effort of Gospel preaching 3000 people from all quarters gave evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in the streets of Jerusalem. Dwellers from all lands became the first monuments of grace. This tremendous interference with the interests of this world soon awakened hostility, and persecution scattered them to the remotest regions, even as far as Rome, and everywhere with the true instincts of new converts, every man and woman became an evangelist, like the woman of Samaria, told all that they had seen and heard in Jerusalem, till on all hands the souls of men caught the fire. Everywhere the simple story of the Son of God coming to the earth, dying, rising again and ascending to heaven moved men, multitudes believed, and everywhere new communities gathered to avow their adherence to Him. In every society some of the best of the first fruits, the Apostles set as elders to oversee the interests of the rest, and the Church was thus organised on very simple Presbyterian lines. In every Jewish community there was a synagogue, over which there were presbyters from time immemorial, to govern the affairs of the people in secular

and religious matters, specially elected and designated for that object. But the Apostles, while following the old model, introduced Christian doctrine, things hidden in Moses and the Prophets, but now revealed in Jesus Christ, the glorious scheme of redemption, the advent of the Messiah, and the accomplishment of the divine intentions of the recovery of a lost world. The Lord's parting instructions were, "Go and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things, whatever I have commanded you : and lo ! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." "And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." Thus was the Presbyterate instituted.

Definite provision for work.—We have already considered the definite formation of the corporate body called the Church. The next thing which took place was the provision for permanent service and government, by the appointment of presbyters to "oversee" the Church of God, and to provide for a succession "of faithful men who should be able to teach others" (2 Tim. ii. 2). The first serious duty of each congregation was to choose out from among the first fruits of their converts suitable men who were ordained as "elders" to feed the flock of God and to have the oversight of the people. They were not the great ones of the earth. "Not many mighty, not many noble were called," for records exist, as shown already, that often the chief potter of the town or any other tradesman was the leader of the community. But the Holy Spirit was the chief minister, and the Church never prospered better than during those early days when man was nothing and

God was all and in all. Bearing nothing with them but the commission of Christ in their hearts the unlearned fishermen went forth among the nations, among the cultured and the most barbarous, everywhere reaping abundant fruit and forming congregations, and always after the model of the Jewish Synagogue. The ordinary permanent officials were only two, elders or presbyters and deacons, as many as were required. There were some of the elders who laboured in word and doctrine and some who ruled; the elders were sometimes called bishops or "overseers," as we have seen; but the name is synonymous with elders, the parties were the same and the duties were the same. The deacons were ordained to take charge of all the finances of the congregations and the disbursements among the poor. They were purely secular officials, specially charged with all secular affairs of the Church. Some of them had in addition great gifts of preaching as Stephen had, who was the first martyr, and others possessed gifts all equally helpful for the establishment of the ecclesia of the New Testament. No man can contradict the fact that presbyters and deacons were ordained by Christ's instructions for His Church, and there is no Scriptural authority for anything else, and the two officials, presbyters and deacons, are equally clear from the Word of God. This ruling body, called the Presbyterate, in contradistinction to that of the Episcopate, was established in every city by the Apostles, and was contemporaneous with them.

For the first 200 years the presbyterate was conspicuous. There were several presbyters (or elders) in each congregation. In Divine wisdom it was so arranged that all

the officers were on a footing of perfect equality. "All ye are brethren," was the Lord's instruction. There was in consequence ample room for the development and service of all the gifts, which God gave from time to time to His servants, and for all "talents" with which God endowed them. Under the presbyterate there was ample room for service, without repression from the littleness and jealousy of superiors. This was God's clear intention in His prohibition against any gradation of orders.

Provision for rule and continuity.—Then we have the provision God made for the preservation and propagation of the Church by conferring on the officials a right of ordination, a right which could not be taken from them by any human rules. We have express evidence of ordination by elders or presbyters. We read of the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery (1 Tim. iv. 14). Paul himself though an Apostle was solemnly designated to a particular service by the Holy Ghost by the Presbytery, certain prophets and teachers at Antioch fasted and prayed and laid their hands on him and Barnabas, and sent them away on their mission. We have no instance in Scripture of the consecration of a "diocesan" bishop, or a bishop of any kind merely as a "bishop"—no rules to regulate his office distinct from those which were applied to presbyters. This is a sufficient proof that no order of prelates was designed to be instituted in the Christian Church, where nothing but the presbyterate appeared endowed with all that the Church required.

We see further the provision God made for rule in the presbyterate. There must have been differences and disputes in the primitive congregations as in congregations of

the present time. For these there was enough of power among the elders without any reference to others, probably much in the character of Congregationalism. Disputes were to be told to the Church, and excommunication was to be the last resort for disobedience. But there were wider things intended under the presbyterate, and God made provision for them all. The case referred to the Assembly of Jerusalem will illustrate the capabilities of the presbyterate. It was concerning the relation of the Gentile Christians to the law of Moses in the matter of circumcision—a purely Jewish rite. It was certain the question would arise some day, and it was well that it was in the days of the Apostles. The Jews thought much of the law of Moses, and imagined that everything good, even Christianity itself, must pass to the world through the Synagogue. For these no opinion from any one congregation would be of any avail—not even the opinion of any one man, even the greatest Apostle. They had no “infallible” popes in those days or superior clergy. It was deemed best that the decision of inspiration itself would not be asked. It belonged to the Church, and to Jerusalem the question of circumcision was appealed, where the greatest number of Apostles could be convened, and the greatest number of elders and representative men. The whole Church so far as that was possible was assembled, and the Apostles and elders, the constituted authorities, discussed and voted, and the whole Assembly concurred in the resolution come to. The story reads like the procedure of a discussion in a General Assembly in Scotland. The decision arrived at was one in which all concurred, and it was put on record (Acts xv.) that the

Church of Christ might have a precedent in all time coming. Here we have the presbyterate in action. That is very unlike the procedure in Prelatic Churches, where the clergy, or a favoured section, have all the rule and are spoken of as "the Church." What is called Convocation is a useless institution. It was lately proposed by a good churchman to dissolve it for 150 years, and that the laity should be reintroduced into the Church, as at the beginning, for the regulation of its affairs.

Failure of Arguments.—Every argument fails against the Presbyterate. It was urged that the high priest of the Temple was represented by the prelate, the priests who were under him were represented by the elders and the Levites; but they must be hard up for proofs who make use of similitudes like these. There is not the least vestige of scriptural authority to support this. Jesus Christ is already designated in the New Testament as the antitype of the high priest. "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession Christ Jesus" (Heb. iii. 1). If men insist in carrying out the parallel, it is all in favour of the Presbyterian system, and in support of the Presbyterate. The priests and levites of the temple correspond to our presbyters and our deacons, with none above them, but the great Head of the Church alone. But there is no analogy between the priests of the temple and the Christian ministry, as has been shown already. The former were framed as connected with the ritual of the temple, but the latter were after the model of the synagogue, where there was no ritual, and where the office-bearers were presbyters.

Another argument against the presbyterate and in favour of prelatiic supremacy is equally inconclusive, from the

power conferred on the Apostles in establishing and organising the New Testament Church. We are told that prelates were the successors of the Apostles, and it was natural for them to claim the same prerogatives of ordaining all candidates for the ministry, and ultimately directing them in their duties. But here the premises are borrowed. The Bible gives no support to these assumptions. There is not a word in Scripture about this supremacy, rather the reverse. "Be not ye called masters," Jesus said, "for one is your Master, even Christ" (Matt. xxiii. 10). When the Apostles contended for pre-eminence, He soon repressed this contending by declaring that it should not be among them, as it was in the kingdoms of this earth, where some are appointed to exercise lordship over others; and that, instead of aiming at the possession of superior power or rank, they must look on each other as brethren and equals (Mark x. 45). The most gifted and the most useful must be servant of all. Matthias, it is said, was ordained to fill the vacant "bishopric" of Judas. But Judas was never a bishop. This is only a poor translation of the original. It would be a better rendering of the word, in its more general rendering of "office" or "employment." It is so rendered in the Syriac, Ethiopic and other ancient versions. It is so rendered in Ps. cix. 8.

Others endeavour to frame an argument against the equality of the presbyterate by the gradation of office which they say existed between the twelve Apostles and the seventy. But the New Testament gives not a vestige of proof of any such gradation. The seventy were deputed by Christ for a special temporary service. They were not appointed by the twelve, nor were they in any way respon-

sible to them, or subordinate to them. They were sent out two and two with the same message, with the same gifts, and the same authority; and when the seventy fulfilled their commission we hear no more of them. The duty required of them was accomplished, and then the band was dissolved. It was never a feature of Christ's work to appoint men for office in His kingdom who were to be of no use, and to whom no special duty was attached. The argument fails absolutely for any support, to the hierarchical system of the prelatic churches.

And the last resort is found by the prelatists for their bishops, and against the presbyterate in the angels of the seven Churches. This argument if allowed would serve several objects. It would connect the Apostle John, the only survivor of the band, with the recognition of the "monarchical episcopate," and with the general development of prelacy.

Regarding John's reputed connection with Episcopacy we shall consider later on in closing this argument, but meantime we notice that the title "angels to the seven churches" we owe to the Jewish economy (אַנְגֶּלֹס *ἄγγελος*), "angel" means a messenger. Christ was called the Angel or Messenger of the Covenant (Mal. iii. 1). The spies in the wilderness are called angels or messengers (Heb. xi. 31, James ii. 25), and with the exile of Patmos in Revelations the metaphor means a "messenger" who is a ruler in the Church. Prelatists say yes, it means a diocesan bishop, the chief pastor of the Church to which he belonged holding a permanent authority over its other pastors. But there is no ground for this conclusion. In one case, at least, the title is symbolical of the whole congregation, and

indicates its general character more than any individual ruler. The angel of the Church in Smyrna is addressed in the plural: "The devil shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days (Rev. ii. 10). And the use in verse 20 of Jezebel, a female personage, seems symbolical, and would suggest a symbolical meaning for the angels. In other cases it may be some well known official like the presiding elder among Presbyterians, *primus inter pares*, with temporary position, and the official for any communication to the congregation. But it is of importance to notice that the angel in the Jewish synagogue was the Shelliach Zibbur, the leader of the services, and had no authority or connection over any other congregation but his own. He was not even the chief ruler of his own synagogue. Such an official as diocesan bishop with rule over several other leaders is wholly unknown among the Jews. In the Christian synagogue there was one presiding pastor, a presbyter among many presbyters, a bishop where there were several bishops, a congregational bishop such as all Christian ministers are. But diocesan bishop is entirely unknown in Scripture, and was entirely unknown in history till about A.D. 314. And in words used by Clement Romanus, Ignatius, Polycarp and Cyprian, There was nothing more than the congregational bishop, which became the stepping-stone to the dignities which ambitious men aspired to soon after.

Gore's spasmodic effort.—In closing our argument for the Presbyterate as the original pattern of the Church of the New Testament, we notice the efforts of Bishop Gore to establish his Episcopate with some apostolic authority. John was the last of the Apostles and the best for his

purpose, if he could in any way connect him as countenancing prelacy at the close of his life. We have seen already that he is far from being a safe leader for so important a subject. As the editor of "Lux Mundi" and other writings, we should have expected him to be accurate. With considerable pains he gathers up all the traditions of the past about the close of the life of the "beloved disciple." With a strong bias he connects all the gossip he can find, and forms a story of singular interest, which, if true, would only detract from the support he is so keen to possess for his Episcopate. On p. 286 he tells us "that after the death of the despot who banished John to Patmos he came to reside at Ephesus. Polycrates, who was bishop there within the second century, speaks of him 'who lay upon the Lord's breast' as having become 'a priest wearing the mitre, and witness and teacher,' before he fell asleep in Ephesus. What then was the nature of St John's activity during this last period of his life? A tradition which cannot be set aside connects with his name not only the writing of the Fourth Gospel, but also the establishment of Episcopacy in its later sense. 'Listen,' says Clement of Alexandria, 'to a legend, which is no legend but very history, which has been handed down and preserved about John the Apostle: When . . . he returned to Ephesus he used to go away when he was summoned to the neighbouring districts as well, in some places to establish bishops, in others to organise whole churches, in others to ordain to the clergy some one of those indicated by the Spirit.' The reference here is to bishops in the later sense, and Clement means that St John ordained one bishop in each place, for the history which he goes on to

narrate turns on the conduct of one of those appointed bishops 'who presided over' a certain city, which St John visited once and again on occasions of necessity. Here then we have St John organising Episcopacy in the district about Ephesus." Gore is too anxious to make all his bishops diocesan. But Clement, whom he quotes, calls this very man *ὁ πρεσβύτερος*, and he may have been no other than the president of the legal presbytery, or in Scotch fashion the moderator of the kirk session. Further on he states, "It suggests strongly that St John regarded it as his apostolic function to perpetuate a church ministry," all this, be it remembered, in opposition to the early discipline of his own life, when his own and his mother's ambition was rebuked by Christ, and all the words of this same John in his 3rd Epistle, A.D. 90, who, instead of favouring the establishment of Episcopacy, or even being willing to connive at it, opposed it to the utmost. He dreaded the assumption of supreme power by the administrative official in any congregation. He calls himself a presbyter, and sought no higher office, and denounced Diotrephes for his doing so.

We have besides a fair sample in the above, of the progress of transmutation of a faint legend into a *veritable fact* of history. There is first a bit of ecclesiastical gossip heard of in 194-203. Years pass and it becomes a tradition, then it takes the shape of a "legend," and in the course of sufficient time it is transformed into a "legend which is no legend, but very history, which has been handed down and preserved about John the Apostle." When such evidence reaches the hands of a modern sacerdotalist, who goes round the world for apostolic authority for the sacerdotal fictions,

it becomes "very history." We have shown before how easily Canon Gore accepted the twisted quotation from the Septuagint by Clement of Rome, as it suited his object, and since the date of the writing of "Christian Ministry" he has been misleading all his followers. We see what need there is that his writings, and especially "Christian Ministry," should be subjected to the scientific method of faithful criticism.

He represents besides an old man in his dotage forgetting all the details of his past beautiful life, and the teaching of his Master, forgetting his own strong testimony about ambitious men seeking pre-eminence in the year A.D. 90-96, when 3 John and Revelation are believed to have been written; and in his feeble old age, a year or two after, "becoming a priest and wearing a mitre," and led about in his imbecility, imposed on by interested parties, establishing Episcopacy and renouncing his Presbyterate. Will any of our readers believe this picture to be true? Rather than lose the benefit of such doubtful tradition, Gore accepts all this, which, if correct, only shows what an old man will do, when amidst the feebleness of old age, he will be led to what his whole life has disproved. Another proof why we accept the Bible and the Bible alone for our Protestant faith, and leave Polycrates and Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian and Gore severely alone, with "their legends which are no legends, but very history" of a very questionable character.

We close our argument for the Presbyterate by a brief repetition. In 2 Tim. ii. 2 Paul says, "The things which thou hast heard of me, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." For this

provision of a succession of faithful pastors and teachers the Apostle is most anxious, but above all things for apostolic purity of doctrine rather than for any supposed apostolic succession in the Church's ministers. There were many false teachers abroad, and for that reason he urges the selection of faithful men of the true evangelic pentecostal character, whose duty it will be to keep the others away, and with sufficient power for that duty. The officers selected by the people were elders and deacons, designated to office by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. The elders were divided into two classes, the teaching elders and the ruling. Not only had they authority to rule and to regulate all local congregational affairs, but when any question arose of wider importance as at Antioch, there was provision for appeal to the assembly of the Church, where the widest representation of the whole Church could be convened as at the Assembly of Jerusalem, and there they had the final decision. That is a brief scriptural statement of the original provision which is recognised all over the world where Presbyterianism prevails. But Gore admits that there is no recognition of Episcopacy in Scripture, while Presbyterians see everywhere in the New Testament the proofs of the system to which they adhere.

Direct Testimony.—Even the early fathers admit the existence of the Presbyterate for which we contend. Clement of Rome, though he shows leanings to Prelacy, yet in his letter to the Corinthians, a church which was at the time in anarchy, reproves them for an insurrection against their "presbyters." He urges, "Do ye therefore who have originated this rebellion submit yourselves *unto your presbyters*," without any allusion to any chief bishop.

Polycarp in his epistle to the Philippians enjoins "the people to be subject to their presbyters and deacons" (Crawford, p. 42).

Ignatius has written much, but more is attributed to him than he ever wrote. It is impossible to enter on the discussion of his letters, said to be originally fifteen, and to be written on his journey to Rome to suffer martyrdom. Several of them are now admitted to be pure forgeries, but eagerly adopted by Prelatists for their testimony, and Gore accepts them all. But the character of some of them is sufficiently known from a few quotations: "Bishops are considered not successors of the Apostles, but rather of Christ or God." "They are clothed with a monarchical authority which belonged to the Apostles but not to the Presbyters" (Gore, p. 304). "Plainly we ought to regard the bishop as the Lord Himself" (p. 294). The forgery is apparent. Canon Gore on this doubtful authority says "that Episcopacy was of the essence of the Church and of Apostolic authority as co-extensive with the Church, that is everywhere." "Even, however," he says (p. 288), "if we had not such direct testimony as has just been recorded to this organisation of Episcopacy by the Apostles who survived the destruction of Jerusalem, the claim which Ignatius makes for Episcopacy in the beginning of the second century would force us to postulate it." Yes! if men will only form fancies, and accept as facts of history what over sanguine men imagine. We have seen what his *direct testimony* is worth. But we have the testimony of Jerome, who flourished about A.D. 380. In his commentary on Titus i. 5 he says, "A presbyter is the same as a bishop. And before there were, through the

instigation of the devil, different parties in religion, and it was said among different people, I am of Paul, I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, the churches were governed by the common council of presbyters. Presbyters and bishops were the same. But by little and little, that the seeds of discussion might be plucked up, the whole care of the Church was committed to one. Let bishops know, that they are above presbyters more by the custom of the Church, than by any real appointment of Christ."

Further, in the year A.D. 428, in the second council of Carthage, whose acts were ratified by the sixth general council of Trullo, the case was considered of certain districts in which no Episcopacy was established; it was thought expedient to allow these districts to continue in the same condition as before. The decree of the council is in the following terms:—"It seemeth good to us, that those dioceses which never have received bishops should continue without them" (Crawford, p. 45). Here is a document completely opposed to the "non-Episcopal area" of Gore. "Moreover, it is a well ascertained fact that the Christians in Bavaria were under a Presbyterian form of government for 200 years from their conversion, till in A.D. 740 the Pope of Rome induced them to submit to Prelacy" (Crawford, p. 45).

CHAPTER XXXII

THE HISTORY OF THE PRESBYTERATE

IT is one of the most substantial facts of history, that Christ established the Presbyterate and adopted Presbyterianism for the Church of the New Testament. We

must accept this fact as the plainest statement of the Scriptures, when the "Apostles ordained elders in every city," and we read of nothing else. The principles of that polity were early established, with all the remarkable capabilities they contained for the extension of the Gospel and the defence of the faith. Besides there was ample provision for government, discipline and permanency. The history of Presbyterianism ever since, where it has had scope for its development, is enough to show what the Great Founder of the Church put into it, for the regeneration of the world. Presbyterianism was the first and only occupant of the field for 200 or 300 years. It was distinctly the work of God. Prelacy was the work of man, a human invention without any sanction from Scripture. Jerome says, "That under the government of one all the seeds of discussion might be plucked up." But the government of one turned out the fruitful cause of discussion, and it was under this form of government that all the discussions, discords and heresies took place. It was after the growth of the bishop that the Church became the scene of numberless quarrels and contentions. In practice it was not to be compared to the former for the elements it contains, for effective government and results of a moral and spiritual and social nature. These principles were early recognised, were never changed, never cancelled. With the Bible they were carried to various parts of the earth and took root and flourished, and we must remember that the Presbyterate has been able to give a good account of itself for nineteen centuries. Even where it has been almost driven to death, it has shown wonderful recuperative power in, phoenix like, rising from

the ashes to resume a new vigorous career with the blessing and the reviving power of the Holy Ghost. At times its life seemed very low, it might look as if faith had died a natural death. Under the shadow of an elaborate symbolism it appeared as if the simple Gospel was banished from the earth, or as if under the blighting influence of the world, evangelical truth had died, and there was to be no more heard of the simple Gospel among mankind. But even in the darkest hour, God took one or two men into His secret council chamber, and there instructed them on blackness of sin, and the method of the sinner's cleansing, and touching their lips with the live coal sent them forth in the name of the King of Kings and the Lord of Hosts. There followed quickly a revival of principles, and power and grace; and the simple evangelical faith arose and went forth bravely to new conquests, and to record a fresh page of the history of redemption.

It is not our intention to trace the history of Presbyterianism in every land in which it has found a lodgment. That is not needed for our present purpose, or to show that its principles have ever been in force from New Testament times. It is enough that we take Scotland and show how it found a home there, and made a people with a distinct national character, and a history of which no Scotsman has any cause to be ashamed. There the word of God has been a household heritage, and reared on the Westminster Catechism and Confession, and its common sense, it has given itself to brave deeds and righteousness, and the nation has established a nature which is everywhere treated with respect.

Scottish Record of the Presbyterate.—We must never

forget that in Scotland from the earliest times, the Church's Directory became familiar by the study of the New Testament. Men read the original instructions by the Apostles. "Ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee" (Titus i. 5). "Neglect not the gift that was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery" (1 Tim. iv. 14). Again Paul says, "The things that thou hast heard of me, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. ii. 2). "Preach the word" (2 Tim. iv. 2). These were the things on which the Apostle gave the most explicit orders: apostolic purity of the Church's doctrine, and faithful men to teach it, and the preaching of the Gospel for the conversion of men. Of the three all the world, except the sacerdotalists, would say that the preaching of pure doctrine was the most essential. Whereas in the sacerdotal school the supposed Apostolic succession is everything, and the sacrament as the means of conversion. The officials intended are the ordinary class of spiritual pastors and instructors. That function of oversight of pastors Christ placed in the hands of the presbytery exclusively, and that power is extended to all without distinction who are esteemed faithful men and able to teach.

This is the Church's Directory and every word of it is known to the people, and assented to with the deepest and devoutest veneration, and the belief of it has been written on the moors of Scotland in the people's blood. Time after time when the cause of God and evangelical life had died in the land, the living God had caused the divine breath of the Spirit to blow over fields of the dead, to bring the land to wave again with the beauty of life.

Christ is the living Head, and the operations of the Holy Ghost are the most real—silent yet powerful as the wind, but breathing life where Christ was fulfilling His word.

There are distinct historical marks in this northern kingdom which we have to follow. In Rom. xv. 24 we read part of Paul's missionary programme, that it was his intention to visit Spain on his journey to Rome. There was no intimation that he ever cancelled this part of his mission projects, for they were under the special direction of the Holy Ghost. If this intention was carried out, it would have been between his first imprisonment related in Acts xxviii. 30 and his second related in 2 Tim. iv. If that intention was fulfilled there was nothing to prevent a visit to the isles of the Gentiles, the shores of Britain, for there was a considerable commercial connection between Cornwall and Spain in tin, the staple industry of that county. Many believe that Paul first planted the seed of the British Church, for Clement tells us, "he extended his labours to the utmost bounds of the West" (Baker, 63). There are distinct traces in history of a native church, going back to Apostolic times. Tertullian (adv. Judæos c. 7) at the end of the second century speaks of "parts of Britain inaccessible to the Roman arms, but subject to Christ." Along with handfuls of the Vaudois in the valleys of Piedmont and the Alps, they formed a simple, pure, original church, which kept the light burning. Cæsar tells us that the dominant heathenism of Britain was Druidism, with its human sacrifices. Gildas, our earliest native historian, states that the Sun of Righteousness had dawned in his country before A.D. 61. If that is true it is conclusive. Three British bishops were present at the Council of Arles, A.D. 314. Of

course they were probably bishops of the primitive type, when presbyter and bishop were synonymous, before the rule of the hierarchy. Or Christianity might have been carried to Britain by Cæsar's soldiers. At any rate a pure Church existed there. Brown of Langton (p. 283) says "that Christianity prospered in Scotland for centuries without bishops." All our histories relate that in A.D. 203 Christianity was embraced in Scotland, and no bishop appeared till A.D. 429 or 430, when Palladius was despatched thither by Pope Celestine. Such is the statement of Prosper of Aquitaine, who, according to the late Bishop Skinner, "lived in the time when, and the place where, Palladius resided," before he came to Britain; "for," says he, "227 years before Scotland was converted, or in the year 430, Palladius being ordained was sent to the Scots believing in Christ as their first bishop (*primus episcopus*)."

This is confirmed by Bede, though a zealous Episcopalian, who repeats the words of Prosper ("Chron. Temper.," p. 26, "Hist.," Lib. i. cap. 13). John of Fordun, a respectable writer, says, "That before the coming of Palladius, the Scots had as teachers of the faith and administrators of the sacraments *only presbyters and monks following the custom of the primitive church*" ("Scotichronicon," Lib. iii. cap. 8). Sir George Mackenzie, in his defence of the Royal line, p. 26, says he was a "presbyter and not a monk as St Asaph calls him." A similar statement is contained in the Breviary of Aberdeen, "where the Scots before the time of Palladius are described as having had for teachers of the faith and ministers of the sacraments, presbyters and monks following only the rite and custom of the primitive Church" (In Julic, fol. 24, 25). John Major, a "man

more studious of truth than eloquence," as Bishop Lesley says ("Hist. Scot.," Lib. ix. p. 414), wrote that "in 429 A.D. Pope Celestine consecrated St Palladius a bishop and sent him to Scotland, for the Scots were previously instructed in the faith by presbyters and monks *without bishops*" ("Hist. Maj. Brittainaia," Lib. ii. cap. 2, fol. 23). Here then is historical testimony on the part of writers, all of whom were Episcopalians, that for the first two hundred years the polity of the Church in the northern kingdom was by presbyters and not according to that which existed in the days of Prosper or Bede, but as they express it to "the custom of the primitive Church." One point alone is wanting in history, whether that can be found or not is uncertain, Who was it first planted Christianity in Britain? But there can be no doubt that the seed was good and that the hand that planted it was a true one, for the seed grew and waxed great and filled the earth with the glory of it. The Christianity of Scotland was not owing to Palladius, for it existed there in the Presbyterate for hundreds of years before his day, and before bishops were known.

The mission of Palladius has been questioned, but needlessly. Dr Jamieson in his Hist. Account of the Culdees, p. 9., says that according to the MS. of Coupar he resided at Fordun in the Mearns, and this coincides with history and tradition. If Palladius did anything to bring the Church into conformity with that of Rome, the materials he had were already baptised Presbyterians, and in the estimation of Rome were not Christians. Palladius, however, made no impression on Scotland, and the Episcopate was never commenced, and in the long centuries the original Church of

Scotland was spreading. The advent of Columba in Iona gave a new impetus to the religious condition of the country.

Columba's Work.—One of the most beautiful chapters in the history of the evangelism of the world is written in connection with the life and labours of this remarkable man, and his equally distinguished companions. He came originally from Ireland, born it is said in 521 A.D., his advent in Scotland was about A.D. 563, and was of the blood royal of that country. He was converted through St Patrick, and devoted himself to the service of Christ. With twelve companions he established a religious institution in Iona for the study of the word, and the preaching of the Gospel. He was nothing more than a presbyter, and among his twelve companions he sat like any presbyterian minister, as the moderator of his kirk session. Bishop Dowden of Edinburgh calls him a presbyter abbot (Celtic Church). There were no vows among them, but the circumstances to which they had devoted themselves circumscribed their lives. They were very poor without any vow of poverty, probably not seeing a coin from the beginning of the year to the end. They were celibates, for the presence of any female society would be a great inconvenience and a hindrance in so rude an age. They were obedient but they required no vow, for the one spirit of devotion to Christ made them one without a vestige of a vow of consecration. Episcopal writers call their institution a monastery and Columba an abbot. It would be nearer the truth if they were called humble presbyters with Columba as president, and their institution a college, the humblest in the world constructed of wattled branches,

But there these men found means for working for God, and there are still traces of their labours in the islands neighbouring to Iona and on west coast of Scotland ; along the region now occupied by the Caledonian Canal to Inverness, round to Aberdeenshire and the Fifeshire coasts. No other agency in the world could have produced the effects which followed their labours, as the glorious evangel of God's grace. The news spread of the labours of these good men, when Bede informs us that Oswald, King of Northumberland, sent for a presbyter to Iona. After ordination Cormac was first sent and established himself at Lindisfarne ; but his mission was not successful. Whether it was that he was discouraged by the rudeness of the people, he shortly returned to Iona declaring that the Angles were so stubborn and barbarous, that their conversion was impossible. Aidan, hearing the report, it is said, declared, " Brother, the fault was yours, you exacted from the pagans more than they were able to bear. You should have adopted the apostolic plan, and given them first the milk of gentle doctrine, till they were gradually nourished with the truths of the Gospel, and they became capable of receiving stronger meat and practising a Christian life." He was at once designated as the successor of Cormac, and after him Finan, and the result of their labours was that Lindisfarne became a second Iona. Far and near the Gospel triumphed, Northumberland, Durham, with Cumberland, and all the region south of the Firth of Forth came under the power of the truth. The Church of Scotland became the mother Church of that of England, and the only ordination they had, was that of the primitive presbytery, for Iona knew no other. They, too, prospered under the historic presbyterate. They found

that nothing else was required for carrying on the glorious purposes of the Almighty, for the salvation of sinners and the establishment of the kingdom of righteousness on the earth. The evangelism of that part of the country was secured and a Christian ministry was organised, after the primitive model. In course of time the religion of Christ extended, and the followers of the Gospel under the name of Culdees, servants of God, spread far and near over Scotland and England.

Columba's work was done in 597, the year of his death, but before that event took place there were twelve centres established in Scotland, at St Andrews, Dunkeld, Culross, Lochleven, Glasgow and other parts, and the worship of the true God was thus known to a considerable extent.

The tidings of these remarkable religious movements spread far and near and reached Rome, and in 596 Priest Augustine appeared on the shores of England, as the delegate of Pope Gregory I., to commence that work of the transformation of the British Church to the model supplied by that of Rome, and then began the fierce struggles of the papacy to suppress the British native Church of the Culdees. Augustine first obtained the favour of King Ethelbert, who gave him permission to establish himself and his missionaries at Canterbury. A few weeks later Augustine returned to France, received consecration to the see of Canterbury, and came back as the first Archbishop. He consecrated Mellitus, Bishop of London, and Justus, Bishop of Rochester, after the Romish model. As he pressed his conquests westward, he was confronted with the native British Church, whose ministers refused to submit to the supremacy claimed by the pope and his delegate, and for centuries there

remained a clear line of demarcation. For the first time the historical succession was heard of in Britain, when Augustine set up Romish rule and exhibited Romish intolerance and arrogance; but it must not be forgotten that for the first five hundred years of religious Church life in England, the historical episcopate was never heard of or anything higher than the presbyter of the primitive church. In 597 what is called the historical episcopate began its existence in England, but its establishment was not a success. As Augustine felt his end approaching he consecrated his companion, Laurence, a most improper thing to do according to canon law, but it was an inauspicious experience of the extravagant pretensions of prelatic rule, to be the only channels of God's grace, and nothing but uncovenanted mercies of God to those who are outside this rule. Through the centuries the original Church was driven back, and the growing power of Rome triumphed everywhere.

John Wycliffe.—About 1360 the influence of John Wycliffe began to be felt in England, in his giving the Bible to the people in their own language, and in raising the spirit of England to resist the oppression of the pope. It was chiefly in training a band of Oxford graduates to go forth over England as preachers, he unfolded to his countrymen the terms of the glorious Gospel. His labours were attended with astonishing success. Never was there a more pitiable spectacle than when he buckled on his armour. The land was overrun with Romish priests and monks. Like the plague of frogs in Egypt, the priests were everywhere. His first bold protest declared, "That neither prelates nor doctors, priests nor deacons, shall hold

secular offices in this realm—that is those of Chancery, the Treasury, Privy Seal and other such offices in the Exchequer, neither stewards of lands, nor stewards of the hall, nor clerks of the kitchen, nor clerks of accounts, neither shall they be occupied in any secular office in lords' courts, more especially while secular men are sufficient to do such offices." It was intolerable when clerics grew so numerous as to elbow laymen out of all employment, which was legitimately theirs, and to become so arrogant as almost to question the right of any man to life, who was not in orders or habited in the vesture of the monk. The state of this land became intolerable, and when through the cunning of the priests about three fourths of the soil of the country came into possession of the Church, the land was under a veritable curse. By and by the Bible was opened, the charter of every man's liberty, and when the band of "poor preachers" went itinerating over England proclaiming the terms of the Gospel, a free pardon for every sinner, without money and without price, and liberty to the captive, and room for every Englishman to earn his bread honestly, in the sight of God and with the peace and the blessing of heaven, the effect in England was marvellous. The tidings spread, and there was an immediate upheaval against Rome and the arrogance of the priests. There was a revival of religion, but that was not all. The social life of the country began to improve. Wycliffe's tracts against Transubstantiation and the Doctrines of the Papacy were like great gun shots which echoed round the Vatican itself. A Romish chronicler of the period says, "A man could not meet two people on the road, but one of them was a disciple of Wycliffe." The utmost hatred was roused around the reformer. Bull

after bull was thundered against him from Rome. But again "it was no more than a noise." The best part of England stood behind the brave good man, who was bold enough to question the right of any foreign despot to exercise rule in this country.

As it was with other reformers, Luther, John Knox and the rest, in God's good providence there were not wanting men in high position who stood up to defend the right, and so it was with Wycliffe. The bishops were fired with anger, and summoned him to a special commission at St Paul's to answer for his conduct, but he went accompanied by his two friends, John of Gaunt and Lord Henry Percy. Before the trial began an unseemly brawl between the bishops' retainers and those of Percy soon ended the conference, and the court was obliged to rise without the trial. In the following year he was summoned to Lambeth; but the sentence was defeated by the cries of a multitude of the citizens of London exclaiming, "The pope's briefs shall have no effect in England without the King's consent." Despite all opposition he finished his course in peace at Lutterworth. Angry that they were defeated in not burning this heretic like the rest, the Council of Constance in 1415 declared his books to be heretical, and commanded his bones to be dug up out of the grave and burnt. This decree was disregarded for thirteen years, but at last by the peremptory orders of the pope the body was burnt and the ashes cast into the Swift; and so, as Thomas Fuller says, "This brook did convey his ashes into the Avon, and the Avon into the Severn, and then into the ocean, and so the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over."

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE PRESBYTERATE AT THE REFORMATION

IN the next century the glorious light of the Reformation broke, and in every land reformers arose, flung aside the worship and the traditions of the Papacy, and everywhere men went back to the New Testament for the original model of the Church of Christ, and adopted it.

Was it merely an accident that one man after another appeared to change the face of Europe? It was God taking up His own work again by His own Spirit, here and there in different lands, awakening one or two to the value of the Gospel, to proclaim it, and in marvellous ways providing hiding places for them. We have not space to follow the various causes which contributed to this astonishing result; but without a doubt the rise of letters, and the giving of the Bible to the people in their own language, and under the teaching of the Holy Ghost the blight of winter began to be dispelled, and in the black night one star after another began to shine till the daylight broke. Wycliffe, called the "first bright morning star" of the Reformation, revealed the simple Gospel amidst the gross darkness. He beheld that all the extravagance of power claimed by the pope was a huge assumption. Among other things, he wrote, "I boldly assert that in the primitive Church in the time of the Apostle Paul, two orders of clergy were thought sufficient, viz: presbyters and deacons, and I do also say that in the time of Paul a presbyter and a bishop were one and the same" (Crawford, 45). No wonder that he was hated by the priestcraft of Rome. The marvel is that the

light was not extinguished in blood at an early day. He was the first of the brave men of the Reformation who led the people back to the New Testament, pointing to the many excrescences of symbolic worship, and determined to sweep out from God's house everything having a heathen origin. Every extravagance in ritual, and every doctrine introduced in corrupt days were swept away. The principle which the Reformers adopted was to fall back on Scripture and Scripture alone, as the Rule of Faith for Protestants. John Huss, about 1405, and Jerome of Prague soon after, became shining lights in Bohemia, and caught the spirit of Wycliffe. One of the charges brought against these two noble men was that in "their appeal to Scripture they allowed no difference of order among those who bear office in the Church of Christ" (Crawford 47). Later on in 1414 and 1416 they were burnt, and their ashes thrown into the Rhine. Later in 1501 God took a solitary monk, the son of a German miner, a man without a name or patronage, but a man with an iron will and brave heart, and to him he taught by the Holy Ghost the reality of sin and judgment, and pardon through faith in Christ. In His own way God burnt the truth into his heart of hearts, and Luther arose in the strength of the Almighty, to shake to its foundation the great hierarchy of Rome, and along with Melancthon he brought back Germany to the Scriptures, and expressed their convictions that Presbyterianism was the scriptural polity of the primitive ages, although for the sake of peace they had no objection to a modified episcopacy. Luther was nothing but a presbyter, and exercised for thirty years the power of granting ordination, and, on one occasion at the request of the elector of Saxony, consecrated the bishop

of a diocese, which "would have been gross inconsistency had he held such an office to be by divine right, an ecclesiastic of superior order to himself" (Crawford 47).

Time after time there shone forth other lights, and fresh reformers arose to give the word of God to the people, Zwinglius, Beza, Bullenger, Musculus, Calvin and Knox. In Switzerland, France, The Netherlands, Italy, the Waldensian Valleys, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Bohemia, Hungary, Poland, Denmark, Belgium, (Porteous), — everywhere reformers arose, brought back the Scriptures to the nations, and everywhere the old principles of the primitive Church, in which the clergy and laity had equal rights, came to be understood and adopted. In Scotland, Presbyterianism was fondly accepted. In England while the Protestant doctrines were accepted and embodied in the thirty-nine articles, the form of government retained was that of prelacy. In Presbyterian Churches every extravagance in ritual, and every doctrine introduced in corrupt days, was swept out of God's house. No traditions, no customs were suffered, no matter of what antiquity if without warrant from the word of God, and opposed to the spirituality of scriptural worship. The Scriptures were exalted to be the unerring standard of the Church of Christ. Their conceptions of the original Church of the New Testament are set forth in every Protestant Presbyterian Church over the world. They are not conscious of departing from the principles, the doctrines and discipline of the New Testament. They stand to-day where Paul taught them to stand nineteen centuries ago. The prelatic system was expressly retained by the corrupt Church of Rome, but in the Reformed Churches of Christendom not one held by the prelatic system, except the

Church of England. They are not schismatics. They repudiate the idea, and they challenge all men to show, wherein they have deviated from the primitive principles of the New Testament. In Scotland they preserve a reasonable pride in that humble fabric, the Magdalene Chapel, Edinburgh, where John Knox and his companions held the first Assembly in the name of Jesus Christ in 1560, to resume the primitive Church of the Apostles and the Culdees. A more auspicious gathering was never held on Scottish soil.

They are schismatics, who, losing faith in their own position, are anxious to provide safety, when their "Church may be in danger" by a return to superstition, and by the establishment of an ecclesiastical aristocracy in God's house, contrary to the principles and the most explicit commands of the Lord. They are the schismatics, who boast that they are in direct line of Apostate Rome, and whose pride is that they have preserved the life blood of that idolatrous system.

CHAPTER XXXIV

PRELACY IN PRACTICE

It will occur to many that surely if the prelatic system is from God, there will be certain advantages apparent in the working out of the system with such a lofty origin. Surely with the experience of a trial of sixteen centuries the superior advantages will be apparent if there are any.

Jerome tells us that the introduction of prelacy was by

"little and little." From the end of the second century to the middle of the fourth, diocesan episcopacy was introduced and established. At first the oldest or most gifted presbyter of a flock was chosen to preside over his co-presbyters with the title of bishop, but *primus inter pares*. At first there were as many bishops as elders, for the parties were the same; but gradually as prelacy developed the numbers of bishops diminished, though Christianity increased. About the closing years of the last Apostle's life there were one hundred bishops in Crete; but in a few centuries afterwards they were reduced to twelve. In a small district of Asia early in the third century there were one hundred and five bishops. In the same district two centuries later there were only nine ("Plea of Presbytery," pp. 55 and 125). At first it was congregational episcopacy, but this developed into diocesan episcopacy, but without any sanction from Scripture, and only for human convenience it was said.

Various things contributed to this change. The delivery of the power of ordination and discipline, which formerly belonged to all presbyters, into the hands of a superior pastor was so revolutionary, that we must believe that some strong measures were necessary for the change. One powerful cause operating in the direction was in the administration. It was usual that a collection was made for the poor every Lord's day, of which the presiding presbyter had complete control. In poor communities which were almost universal in primitive times, the influence of administration was very great. The love of prestige and the ambition natural to the heart of man must have had their weight, to ignore the divine prescriptions which limited

the brotherhood of the saints. Then there was introduction of the priest, the change of the Eucharist to a sacrifice, the introduction of transubstantiation and the mass. All these were human changes. Whatever were the forces at work we see the system in operation. Congregational episcopacy gave place to diocesan prelacy, and as the ages passed additions were made, till the full-grown hierarchy of Rome was the result. We have no wish for controversy, but when prelacy is commended on the ground of some divine right, and all who reject it are denounced as devoid of a Church, without a ministry, or ordinances, or sacraments, or any covenanted grace, it is then the duty of every presbyterian to defend his own. The humblest Christian with his open New Testament, has ample material for the vindication of his system, as he studies certain significant facts in prelacy in practice at his own door, and that instead of improving by the experience of centuries, it has retained all its faults, while Presbyterianism is as effective as ever.

I. *Appointment*.—In Acts i. we have the vacancy in the Apostolate, occasioned by the apostacy of Judas, supplied by the election of Matthias by the members of the Church. But in the “Church of England the Bishops at the Reformation were declared by Act of Parliament, to have no manner of jurisdiction ecclesiastical, but by, and under, and from His Royal Majesty, and hence they took out commissions from the king, by which they acknowledged that they exercised their jurisdiction, only at the king’s courtesy, and would be ready to deliver it up at his pleasure, and were accordingly empowered by the king in his stead to ordain, to give institution, and to do all the other parts of the Episcopal

function" (Burnet's "History of the Reformation," vol. i. p. 228). Further, "that the English bishops have uniformly been, and still are, appointed to their office, not by any ecclesiastical functionary (from whom it might be supposed that some otherwise incommunicable powers of a spiritual kind might descend), but by the absolute will of the sovereign, who first obliges the dean and chapter to elect his nominee (at a certain part of the service the presiding archbishop calls for the mandate of the king), and thereafter requires the archbishops and other bishops to consecrate the person so appointed, leaving them no alternative but that of immediate compliance" (Crawford, "Presbytery or Prelacy," vi.); not even though protests be lodged by proper parties, as in the late appointment of Canon Gore to the see of Worcester. "And further, that the jurisdiction of the bishops in the discipline and government of their clergy, is practically superseded by that of Ecclesiastical Courts, the judges in which are laymen appointed by the crown, extending to vital questions of doctrine, the judicial committee of the Privy Council; in the face of these considerations men must be puzzled to see in an Episcopate so originated, continued and so administered, anything peculiarly spiritual or divine, or anything that can in reason be regarded as exclusively communicative of the grace of God, to ministers or ordinances of that church which is possessed of it." The standing aloof from presbyterians and other churches, as afraid of some contamination, savours of arrogance and intolerance, against which the word of God is one long protest. Of those who originate a religion of their own, and say, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou," God has said

long ago, "These are a smoke in my nose; a fire that burneth all the day." Isa. lxxv. 5.

II. *Doctrine.* — Judging in all charity, the prelatic churches are devoid of doctrine. The Church of Rome had a special epistle from Paul to itself at the beginning. It would now be difficult to find any of the doctrines of that noble document in modern Romanism. The doctrines of grace, and the principles of Presbyterianism even, have taken a deep root in the Douay New Testament. Yet they have been ignored, and the supremacy of the pope has been established to blight the globe. Gross error and superstition have been allowed to overgrow the doctrines of the word of God as decreed in the Council of Trent. The prelatic Church of England has her doctrines stated in her homilies and thirty-nine articles. These articles are generally on sound Protestant lines. Is it not a notorious fact that while many in her communion devoutly adhere to these goodly doctrines, over 4000 of the clergy in the E.C.U. (1902) have ostentatiously proclaimed their adherence, to the peculiar errors of the Church of Rome, in transubstantiation, and the mass, and the other special dogmas of that Church. Have they not regarded with disdain the very word "Protestant," which alone gives them a right to live in their special privileges in this land, of an Established Church. They deplore the Reformation as the greatest calamity! They openly avow alliance with the Church of Rome, clamour for a re-union, and repudiate the name and doctrines of "Protestantism." It is stated as a fact that of her 23,000 ministers, 9,600 with names and addresses given in the "Ritualistic Clergy List, 1902," are now included in the Oxford movement, deliberately moving

Romewards in doctrine and practice. No man can be faithful to Christ who closes his eyes to present-day facts. The prelatric Church of England to the grief of her children is without doctrine. Paul's instruction to Timothy :— "The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also"—Paul's great doctrines of grace are repudiated. "The Church and the power of the Church with her *seven* sacraments" has become the favourite theme of a great section of the Episcopal pulpits. Not the Holy Ghost, but the secret power, the celestial ichor which is said to repose in the clergy, is the hope of the world. Not the word, but the sacraments and priests are to regenerate mankind. Relying on a pure fiction their followers are deluded, and they reckon that when danger comes to the Church, the clergy are safe under this superstition. It may be rather a day of vengeance when deluded men awake to the falsehoods practised on them. Besides the power of "veto" placed in the hands of bishops, constituting them little despots in God's house, with absolute power, crushes out the life and the manliness of every effort after a better state. What is the meaning of the Church Reform League meeting in June 1902, and the newly consecrated Bishop Gore pleading for the "limitation of the beneficed clergy to hold the whole world at defiance?" Why is there no ritualism in the diocese of Sodor and Man, and the rest of England honeycombed with Romanism?

The despised Presbyterian Church of Scotland represents all presbyterians, whatever their minor differences, is one in doctrine, stands by the Westminster confession

and catechism. Time after time her enemies have compelled her to reassert her adherence to the doctrines of grace, as these were fully and clearly unfolded at the Reformation. The great Presbyterian Church of America stands by the same doctrines, and so do the Churches holding by the same system over the globe. In the Holy Spirit and the doctrines of grace, presbyterians behold the great regenerating power of the globe. Presbyterianism was never firmer, never more effective, as a spiritual elevating power in the hands of God, than it is at the present time ; while the lauded prelatic Church, for all her pride, is passing through a great crisis which may end in destruction or complete secession to Rome. The doctrine is in the Prayer Book, but thousands repudiate that, and trample on it at their pleasure. It cannot uphold its own confession.

III. *Discipline*.—The Prelatic Church of England is devoid of discipline. In the Church of Rome the discipline elaborated for centuries is perfect. The pope may be a decrepit old man, but he rules with a rod of iron. His eyes are next to the eyes of God, searching all lands. By his secret agents he knows what is doing 10,000 miles away from the Vatican, and his arm reaches to the remotest corner of the earth. His word must be obeyed. Rome would cease to live on the day she ceased to rule. Kings and rulers, somehow or other, come to fulfil the will of this master ruler. The discipline of Rome is complete ; calmly majestically she moves to be obeyed.

In the Prelatic Church of England there is no authority, but what is derived from the supremacy of the crown, as has been shown. The law has defined what is illegal in

the present juncture, yet the bishops seem afraid or powerless to move, to keep law-breakers in check and the organisation respected. It was said of Napoleon that he found the French army in a helpless state, lions in the ranks and sheep among the generals. But he soon reversed all that by choosing his own leaders, men of the same spirit as their illustrious chief. The Church of England unfortunately is a great army with strong Protestant elements among the laity, and the bench of bishops consisting very much of nerveless men. Every bishop enters office under a vow of "using all diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's word, and both privately and openly to call upon and encourage others to do the same." But the bishops give examples of timidity, lamentable to witness. The bishops exist for the oversight of the clergy and the laity. There are in the Church of England two archbishops and about thirty-three bishops, over a population of twenty-nine millions. What oversight can one bishop give to nearly a million of people. Is it not a fact that these twenty-nine millions are shut out from anything to interest them in their own national Church. The clerical element is regarded as the Church. In the primitive Church the lay element constituted the Church as much as the ministers. But the constitution is sadly reversed now. Good church people are broken-hearted over the open faithlessness of ritualistic clergy. Any representation to bishops meets with rude repulsion. As if it was the bishop's duty to shield the clergy, complaints are discouraged, or members are requested "to seek spiritual pasture elsewhere." The parishioners are in hundreds of thousands of cases driven

out of their own Churches by the Romish practices of men, who despise the proper functions of the pastor—the feeding of the heritage of God. All this is what must be said after a trial of over sixteen hundred years. Inefficiency and failure everywhere !

How does the matter stand with the Presbyterian Church. The presbyterate was never more efficient than at present. We have shown that the presbyterate was a divine appointment, and every man on his conversion gets a place in the Church as a living, constituent member. The poor and the rich are received on the same footing. All elections to office are by the popular suffrage of the members. The presbytery and assembly have sufficient power to settle all matters arising in the oversight of the people, and all matters connected with the government of the Church. Moberly and Gore, in true ritualistic fashion, discourse in their works on the imagined imperfection of Presbyterianism and declare that “it was left incomplete.” Before attempting to depreciate this rival system it would have been better had they studied the matter, and written with some appearance of acquaintance with the object of their dislike. They do not hesitate to reflect on the work of Christ and His Apostles, nor do they see that all the power of the Apostolate except that of working miracles, is behind these simple presbyters when assembled in the name of Jesus Christ, without the creation of a new functionary to give it effect. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland furnishes magnificent illustrations of the authority lodged in the Supreme Presbyterian Court, more conclusive than all the dreams of prejudiced ritualists.

A year or two ago a case was carried by appeal from the Presbytery of Dunoon to the Supreme Court, in which a minister of the Church was declared to be teaching doctrines, traversing the testimony of the Church on the Divinity of Christ. The case was tried and the averments were found to be correct. Time was given to the accused to consider his position, and to withdraw his offending statements. When he appeared again it was to stand by his former teaching. Thereupon, after prayer, the Assembly deposed him from the ministry, and declared him to be no longer a minister of the Church of Scotland.

But coming to more recent history (May 1902) an event occurred the very counterpart of the Assembly of Jerusalem, A.D. 52. A case was carried by appeal from the Presbytery of Dundee, in which it was alleged that a presbyterian minister was following practices, at variance with Protestant custom and in mimicry of Rome. The allegations were proved. Thereafter one of the most prominent Presbyters of the Assembly moved, that the Presbytery of the bounds should be instructed to remove from this Church all offending symbols and every shred of Romanism, and to order the minister, to conform in all matters to the doctrine and practice of Presbyterianism. It was urged that there were in the communion many sympathisers with Romish practices. "All the greater need," said the speaker, "that the Assembly do its duty, and arrest the mischief." Another venerable Presbyter seconded this motion. A motion of a compromising and less drastic character was made. But by a vast majority the Assembly stood true to the uncompromising spirit of presbyterianism, no alliance with Rome, no truce with popery, no room for the Mass or

any of its teaching in the Scottish Presbyterian Church. A lesson was read out for Scotland, and for all the presbyterians of the world, that the presbyterate had no need of a bishop—that Jesus Christ implanted in the original system of the New Testament all the authority of the Apostolate which his Church needed for discipline, without the invention of a new set of officials.

The lower court, the presbytery, has had its first meetings to consider the decision of the Supreme Assembly. Some were in sympathy with the offending minister, but by an immense majority the brethren agreed, as true presbyters, to obey the orders of the Assembly, and to sweep out every vestige of superstition from the offending Church.

The bench of English bishops is surrounded by hundreds of similar cases, where the Romish Mass is openly practised in the Reformed Church of England. They have ample power to sweep out the offensive element; but the evil is tolerated. Thousands on thousands of their faithful people are clamouring for the exercise of discipline on offending clerics; but there is none. The only lamentable effect visible is that the evil is on the increase, and the bishops are hastening the “danger” which they dread. In the Presbyterianism of Scotland, esteemed so immature and incomplete, having nothing but the ecclesiastical banning of ritualists and the uncovenanted mercies of men who fortunately are powerless, the assembly of presbyters put in force the full strength of the Church, including that of the Apostolate, and in a few months the evil is arrested. Christ and his Apostles were right in instituting the presbyterate with the authority it possesses. The schismatics of the fourth century were wrong with their innovations. The

presbyterate, in which Christ incorporated the whole strength of the Christian elements of a democratic church, requires no addition. It contains all the authority of the Apostolate, with Jesus Christ as its living Head and King, and does not even require the old power of working miracles. As we write the blood of John Kensit is crying from the ground, martyred for his zeal for his Church and the Gospel. Who are to be charged with this innocent blood? Had the Parliament of Britain seen to the respect of its own laws, and the Bishops seen to the repression of lawless practices in their churches, this great stain on the Prelatic polity would have been avoided.

IV. *The Bulwark of Protestantism.*—The Prelatic Church professes to be hostile to the pope, and in the twenty-seventh article bravely declares "The Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England." That Church was long regarded as "the Bulwark of Protestantism," but the remarkable fact faces us that the perverts to Rome proceed thither, generally, through the Prelatic Church. The relics of Rome which were left in Reformation days have proved a snare. Since the Anglo-Catholic revival began in 1833 the result is appalling. The *Westminster Gazette* of the 28th June 1899, says: "The new edition of converts of Rome since the Tractarian movement to May 1899, compiled by Mr W. G. Gorman (Swan Sonnenschein & Co.), gives some interesting statistics. According to this authority no fewer than 446 clergymen have gone over in the period mentioned. Next in number come members of the nobility, 417. The army officers who have 'verted are set down at 205; authors, poets, journalists, at 162; legal profession, 129; public

officials, 90 ; medical profession, 60 ; naval officers, 39 ; baronets, 32 ; and peers, 27." It will thus be seen that the Prelatic Church instead of being the "Bulwark of Protestantism" is becoming through the various societies it fosters a training school of perverts for Rome. Year by year the numbers are increasing. The *via media* by which Newman expected to arrest the Romeward movement is becoming the *half way house* where men go to rest awhile, and then take the final descent to the pope and all the dogmas of Rome. The Church Association Almanac gives the names and addresses of thirty-three clergymen who in 1901 alone, became perverts through the English Church Union. The Vatican correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* in writing of recent acquisitions mentioned Mr Charleson, late of Thornliebank, as preparing for the priesthood at the Scots College, Rome, and says, "He is believed to be the first convert from among the ministers of that (Presbyterian) denomination to the Roman Catholic Church." This is not strictly correct, but is very nearly so, another having occurred many years ago. The Prelatic Church is now the nursery of Rome. Whereas the simple presbyterian system, by the familiarity of the members with the Bible truth of its catechism, is the stout defence.

V. *Another feature*, perhaps the least, is not unworthy of notice. The Prelatic Church of England is said to be enormously wealthy. It was long the boast of this communion that it was the only Church in Britain which did not require to appeal to the people for support. Thereby it neglected a scriptural principle. "The Lord ordained that those who preach the gospel should live by the gospel" (1 Cor. ix. 14). No one ever set a command of God at

defiance with impunity, but reaped unexpected and unpleasant consequences, and what, it may be asked, are the results here. On the 4th July 1898, Dr Temple, the Archbishop of Canterbury was the chief speaker at a distinguished assembly in the Mansion House, London, in connection with the Clergy Sustentation Fund? On that occasion he declared that "there were 14,000 benefices in England, and of the clergy of these parishes 6000 had under £200 a year, of these 6000 about 4600 averaged £150 a year, and the remaining 1400 average only £65. The archbishop himself has a princely salary of £15,000 a year, and a palace. These are the incomes of the beneficed clergy, but there are besides about other 9000 clergy. What are the salaries of these, it may be asked, when the maintenance of those who are best provided for is genteel starvation? It is difficult to say, but it is one which is disgraceful to the wealthiest Church in the world, except that of Rome. We have met brethren who have grown grey in the service of this Church with the weekly wage of a tradesman and gifts of old clothing at times, to take the place of worn out rags. The bishops have incomes of thousands, but the majority of the clergy have scarcely the maintenance of an unskilled labourer. Cases occur where old decrepit clergymen find their way to the work-house without any moral turpitude, one man a few weeks ago after four hundred and seventy applications for work being unfortunately too old, and another since, a D.D., actually proved to have died of starvation. One case like this would convulse Scotland.

The Presbyterians are, on the other hand, trained to lean on God and their service for Him in the Gospel. They

believe that it is one of the soundest principles of common sense and philosophy that the labourer is worthy of his hire, even in spiritual things. It is their scriptural principle that those who share in the blessings of the Gospel should be asked to contribute to the maintenance of all the organisation needed for its propagation, and with what result? In Scotland in May 1902 while one or two ministers had £1000 nearly, the incomes of by far the largest portion in one section of the two churches lately united (the Free) was at least £167 and a manse, and in the other (the U.P.) £185 and a manse. In the Church of Scotland there is a very persistent effort on foot to make the poorest living £200 a year, and with the same object in view in all sections of her Presbyterianism, it is very probable it will be soon gained. In the union of all presbyterians which is now desired, with a common purse and the available resources of the Established and the Free Church, it is estimated that no minister would be under £256 a year and a manse. Such a sum is not extravagant certainly, when all the demands are considered for the education of a family, and the need of an educated ministry to cope with all the fads of the present day. The sum of £200 at present aimed at would have been reached long ago with a little more of that cohesion and unity of aim so noticeable in the Church of Rome. But young upstarts, fond of notoriety, strike out on disturbing lines of criticism or theology, to dishearten the true hearted members of the Church forgetting the Apostolic injunction, "Feed the flock of Christ," and forgetting true loyalty is of more consequence than their own paltry notoriety through some disturbing fad. They have besides a widow's fund supported mainly by ministers, which yields £44 a year to

a widow, and £24 a year to each orphan up to the age of eighteen. These are details which no Scottish presbyterian is ashamed of.

VI. The other illustration of prelacy in practice is from an unusual source, a Roman Catholic, with singular facilities of knowing what they speak of in prelatic mimicry of Rome. An article appeared in the *Tablet* of August 15th, 1896, on the "Religious Condition of the People of England," treating the Ritualists in the Church of England with the utmost contempt, probably on the principle that the real thing always despises its imitation. The *Tablet* says: "A band of men, therefore, known later as the 'Oriental Fathers,' met, conferred, and, still nominally Anglican Protestants, set to work to find something which would place them on an entirely superior footing to new sects. In their ardour they referred to catholic works, and, as it is possible to twist most writing from its evident meaning, so did they.

"In the teeth of all history and all concurrent testimony, and their own ordination oath, they began to whisper certain mysterious words soft and low—'Apostolic Succession' and 'Real Presence.' The public could get no explanation—a mystery is always fascinating—a stir was made, and the hopes of these men rose high. But as they searched, those who were honest and truthful among them became Roman Catholics; others too weak for such sacrifice tried to shut their eyes to facts, and so keep the 'good the gods had sent them.'

"Well knowing it is their last hope of continuance, well knowing they intend no submission or obedience to His Holiness, but hoping thus to prevent people becoming Catholics, well knowing, too, that no such petition is legal

or statutable unless presented through Parliament and Privy Council and Queen, they have asked the Pope, whilst denying his supremacy and jurisdiction, and having always denied themselves hitherto any connection with Rome, to declare their orders valid. But their action is repudiated by the more consistent men of their party, and by all the Low Church party. It is a pity certain Frenchmen have been deceived into sympathising with these all round traitors.

“Diversity of belief is rife among the Ritualists themselves as between other protestant sects, and having no real guide beyond each his own individual fancy, their dealings are most arbitrary; and while demanding obedience and blind submission from their followers, they never yet by any chance yield it themselves to their superiors. Each parson among them is absolutely infallible, and while falsely assuring their followers they give them every good the Roman Catholic Church does, and are true Catholics, by no body of men is the Papacy with the Catholic Church more persistently belied and belittled than by them. No wonder that their influence is waning, and that they are generally distrusted by all upright people; and this is well, for ritualist falsity and twisting of the Bible has most largely contributed to the rapid growth of infidelity.”

VII. *Another feature of Prelacy in practice* is the very noticeable contempt towards every other section of the evangelical life of the country. Newman in Tract xx. contended against the clearest facts of history that the Church of England was never under the jurisdiction of Rome. And yet he boasts he derived his ecclesiastical genealogy from that corrupt source. There is something very wrong in the religion of men who cherish extravagant ideas of

superior sanctity, and who show the bitterest hostility to men who love the Lord. History as we have seen is clear upon this fact, that England owes more to Scotland and to Iona, to Aidan and Finan, in the conversion of the country than ever to Rome. It was Aidan who converted Northumberland and the North—not Augustine. Sixty years after his death there was only one Roman bishop in England. But from the Firth of Forth southward, the region to Durham, York, Cumberland and Westmoreland, was evangelised as stated before by Aidan. Finan again was the means of converting the East Saxons, Essex, Middlesex, the half of Herts, the Kingdom of Mercia, comprehending Gloucester, Hereford, Worcester, Warwick, Leicester, Rutland, Northampton, Lincoln, Huntingdon, Beds, Bucks, Oxford, Stafford, Derby, Salop, Notts, Cheshire, and the other half of Herts. These brave men were presbyters of the Celtic Church, and owed nothing of their origin to Rome, and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland was thus the Mother Church of England. Aidan, Finan, Corman, simple presbyters, evangelised the most of England. But England was first subdued evidently by Rome about 668, when Theodore and their leading bishops sought consecration from Rome (Arch. Ussher). But from the fact that whatever connection they had it was broken off at the Reformation in 1532, though England retained its Romish Episcopate, and the other Reformed Churches threw this off, and reverted to the original Presbyterian type of Apostolic days.

There can be no doubt but that every effort is put forth in the Church of England to maintain its position of favoured isolation, at the expense of all other communions.

Time after time, efforts are put forth in Parliament and outside of it, to create disabilities for Nonconformists. At one time it is in Education, at other times it is in the increase of the dignified position of the National Church and all its clergy, and the rigorous prohibition of any recognition of dissenting ministers or their people. Do men imagine that now in this twentieth century they are adopting the best means to produce these results? The teachings of history in the last century, are enough to dispel such a delusion from the minds of men who are capable of learning. From the most reliable sources it is ascertained that dissent in A.D. 1700, numbered one in twenty of the population. In 1800 it was one to eight. But in 1900 the relative proportion in England was as one to one among the people (*British Weekly*, July 24, 1902). The Year Book of the Free Churches, 1902, shows 1,946,959 members, while that of the Anglican Church is 1,974,629. The fact is that disabilities like the old oppression of the first centuries act with marvellous effect on truth, and on men who are influenced profoundly by it.

Dr W. Baker, in his *Lectures on the Church of England* (S. P. G. K.), labours to connect his Church with general orthodoxy of the Protestant Reformed Church of England. He is not ashamed of the old name, and for that we are pleased, while so many in his communion utterly repudiate the name "Protestant," and everything associated with it. But he finds it convenient to avoid any reference to the existence and extent of the Anglo-Catholic movement, which the governors are unable to arrest. He labours to identify his "Church with that which is foretold by the Prophets." One does not clearly understand to what

prophecy he refers, or where it exists ! He surely cannot refer to the twisted quotation by Clement, examined on page 69. If that is so it is not Scripture he has in view, but a forgery, as already shown.

He shows the same meaningless contempt of Presbyterianism by his statement (page 127), "Luther unfortunately by failing to secure proper episcopal succession, let his work drift into a mere Presbyterianism." Luther was as truly consecrated as the best. He adhered to his New Testament, and threw away episcopal ordination, for he could not see it there. He abjured the polity which he could not find in his Bible, and accepted the primitive ordination of presbyters. So did all the other reformers. He set up no new Church, but he revived the original. The new Churches were those which set up on a new model, instead of that of the ancient synagogue. The schismatics were those who ran headlong with the Roman hierarchy at the great revolution under Constantine.

Dr W. Baker if he establishes any position, it is by begging a number of questions. Like very many in his Church he has found most things ready to his hand in the National Reformed Protestant Church of England. He allows what others say that from very early times the Gospel prevailed in Britain, and that a Native Church was in England, of which traces exist since A.D. 200, and that St Alban was martyred in 304 in the Diocletian Persecution. Throughout the Roman Empire things altered at the close of that fierce ordeal, and Constantine revolutionised the Church. It was then Diocesan Episcopacy became a visible factor in the Church, and the hierarchy took practical shape, wherever the Empire extended over the east

and west. But a great gap remains which the wit of man has failed to fill, except by the original Primitive Church of the New Testament from the time of the Apostles. During that period, Presbyterianism with its two officials, the presbyter and deacon, was the only organisation from the beginning to the days of Theodore, who set up the Hierarchy as has been shown about A.D. 668.

He allows that England was evangelised largely in the northern and middle and other parts by the brethren ordained in Iona and Ireland, Aidan, Finan and Cormac. They could carry no higher orders than Columba their leader did, a presbyter. From A.D. 563-596 Columba laboured at Iona, and English Episcopacy under Theodore of Canterbury became visible in A.D. 668.

CHAPTER XXXV

CREDENTIALS OF THE PRESBYTERATE

LIKE one of the fathers, Dr Baker asks for our credentials as Presbyterians. With great good will we have pleasure in presenting them, though we fail to see what right he has to demand them. We have, we believe, an older and a better and a more scriptural constitution than Prelacy ever had, or can have. We are not a sect of recent origin. We are the original Church, with a very long and honourable pedigree. Dr Baker goes back to 669, to Theodore of Canterbury, and to the model of the Roman hierarchy. We go back to Ezra's time if not to that of Moses, for worship pleasing to God, without a particle of the symbolic worship of the Temple, or Paganism, or Romanism. A

pure, spiritual worship we have without idolatrous image, or anything to offend God. Our officials are presbyters of Christ's orders. We appear originally in the Jewish Synagogue, but reconstituted, and into which Christ put a new spirit. In antiquity we have the advantage, for prelacy is a thing of yesterday in comparison.

We believe we have a purer religion. We believe in beauty and taste as much as any people, and we believe in having God's house better than our own, for God deserves our best. He tells us further, "He loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob," Ps. lxxxvii. 2, and we love the place in which He takes pleasure, and the pure, holy worship which we know He desires, the holiest praise, the best reading of His word, and the heavenliest preaching, which He has appointed to be the means of the regeneration of the world. The three orders of prelacy go no further back in general acceptance than the days of Constantine, when diocesan prelacy became the new constitution. But the ministers of the New Testament are to-day, in Presbyterian Churches, what they were when Paul ordained and Peter consecrated the first presbyter in Jerusalem, nineteen centuries ago.

The introduction of Lords and Governors was forbidden in Christ's kingdom. Whoever introduced the idea did a most unscriptural thing. It was a violation of the most imperative command; Christ gave orders that there should be equality among the brotherhood of His ministers. He showed His meaning by washing their feet, to be an example in their devotion to each other. Robes, vestments with a doctrinal meaning were not invented by the Holy Ghost. Were there crosses, or altars, or crucifixes in the Church of

the New Testament? Episcopacy is a modern thing. Her archbishops, and bishops, and priests, and curates, and deacons are novelties in God's house. It is not a difficult thing to mark the dates of her innovations. Newman dated the rise of the Anglo-Catholic movement to A.D. 1833. The introduction of the prayer book, was in 1662; Reformation, abolition of the pope's jurisdiction, 1534; submission to the pope, 664; adoption of diocesan Episcopacy, 314. Then it was prelacy took its origin. But the first Christian presbyters or pastors took office alongside of, and under the Apostles to succeed them, and ordained others according to apostolic instructions (2 Tim. ii. 2), to perpetuate the Christian ministry and the Christian Church. For fulfilling these divine orders, the dignitaries of the Church of England reprove us, but we have only carried out divine orders. These are our credentials. Every year is proving that in the model Assembly of Jerusalem we have the model of an efficient Church court, with authority sufficient for full and efficient administration. The Presbyterian Assemblies of 1902 are exactly on the model of that of Jerusalem, and it is to the honour of Scotland that the efficiency of her Presbyterianism is understood and acknowledged, and before the world she exhibits what resources are available in this simple government.

Our credentials further include singular continuity in our worship. There is great respect among us, from the days of the Apostles, to the models of the synagogue in our services. We covet earnestly the best gifts, and we cherish a very strong regard to the apostolic injunction, "Let all things be done decently and in order." For that reason we carry out the original ideas in our worship. We express the

deepest heartfelt humiliation over sin, and thankfulness to God for all His mercies, and the consecration of heart to the service of the Lord in fruitful living. We have our firm conviction that the chief part of public worship is not sacramental, not the supper of the Lord. That is a memorial service, "This do in remembrance of me." The chief part of our religious service is the preaching of the word. The Church was born in prayer but extended by the preaching of the word. "For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," 1 Cor. i. 21. Christ gave us this divine example, He was the first great Gospel Preacher. "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also : for therefore came I forth," Mark i. 38. Every attempt to thrust the preaching aside to a secondary place, and to give the most prominent position to the communion table, is a violation of distinct evangelical Protestant doctrine. The side position given to many a pulpit is a step in the way of meeting the ritualistic novelties of the day.

In our worship we believe it should be spiritual, the most comely, the sweetest that human beings can render to the great Almighty. For that reason we have the conviction that mere human performances, heartless exhibitions in the preaching, or in the praise, kill devotion, and do not minister to the edification for which the house of God exists. We aim at our best in God's house, for God's satisfaction who is the Chief One present in all our services. For our highest efforts we have the word of God.

The Prelatic Church has permitted various novel ele-

ments. In a society where Lordship is expressly forbidden by Christ and his Apostles, the introduction of the Lord Bishop is an expression of defiance of Christ's orders. The introduction of crucifixes, altars, crosses, material sacrifices, are all violations of the word. The sacrifice of the "mass" is a "blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit." The introduction of images into God's house, besides the bowing down to them, is an express violation of the second commandment.

These things are included in our credentials, and we believe we keep nearer to original models, with a greater claim for being regarded as the Apostolic Church, than those who proudly raise their heads in disdain of our Presbyterianism, and ask for our credentials. We accept the Scripture and the Bible alone as the directory of our religion in worship, doctrine, practice and polity. And we make bold to ask in turn, "Can you present credentials as good for antiquity, for purity, for doctrine and practice, and for continuity in the ways and customs prescribed by the Apostles?" We are not a sect with a history of only three or four centuries. We have over us the shadow of nineteen centuries of continuous history, and we make bold to stand by the Bible, and we do not admit any claim of superiority.

CHAPTER XXXVI

PROPOSALS FOR REUNION

I. *The Suffragan Bishop of Stepney*.—In 1894 Mr Cosmo Gordon Lang, now the Suffragan Bishop of

Stepney, published a paper on the union of the Episcopalians and that of the Church of Scotland, and the means to secure it, which is worthy of a passing notice. He took for granted that there was a remarkable movement in the Established Church of Scotland towards Catholic doctrine. He counselled all concerned to use *Tact*. The first note in this word was great *patience*. It was not the time for official overtures, he said. "If a man is convinced he can not enjoy the security of the sacraments in the Established Church, he must leave it"; that is, if he believes the Church of Scotland is no Church, he must leave it. Are there any in this Church who believe that? "Then if it is only a mere preference for liturgical worship, he will serve the cause better by staying where he is as minister, and swelling the leavening process." Many will consider this a commendation to play the Jesuit. A second element was a generous considerateness for the point of view of the Presbyterians of the Established Church. "Some of them regard their church as the Scottish Branch—imperfect and mutilated—of the visible Catholic Church of Christ. We may not admit the claim or the arguments. . . . Anyone who uses in Scotland the language and the customs prevalent in England in the relations between the Church of England and English Nonconformists, does the greatest damage to the cause of Catholic Union." The tacit admission of all that has been said already of the Episcopal attitude in England towards others. "A third element is a *right sense of the historical situation*." The reverend gentleman writes as an ignorant man, who has not studied the relation of his

prelacy to historical facts. The other elements are of a similar kind. In an appendix on orders our author admits, p. 27, "If a presbyter or college of presbyters had received the authority to ordain, in addition to the ordinary presbyterial office of the ministration of the Word and Sacraments, they could transmit that authority to others. If they had not received it, they could not transmit." That is simply the contention of Presbyterians already over and over again substantiated. He minimises the language of Jerome, as to the early custom of the Church of Alexandria by which "the Presbyters used always to appoint as bishop one chosen out of their number." There is none of the ambiguity there which he seeks to prove. In Scripture we see "the college of Presbyters" or "the Presbytery" according to the language of Scripture, performing the apostolic function entrusted to them (1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. ii. 2), ordaining presbyters, and perpetuating the same office which they had. That right conferred and practised 1900 years ago was never cancelled. Whence came the bishops, archbishops, and the higher functionaries of the hierarchy? It was not from Apostles. He begs many things, but the following will surprise presbyterians: "At the time of the Reformation, John Knox and his companions, though they were presbyters duly ordained to that office, had not received the authority to ordain." This is a groundless assumption. They were ordained presbyters, and were not to exercise the powers and functions of ordaining! They lacked the presence of such worthy prelates as those of Stepney and Worcester! The statement is too ridiculous and

too insulting to the presbyterians of Scotland. There was no provision in apostolic days for bishops even for presiding at the meetings of presbyteries. That was purely a temporary arrangement with no continuity. But the presbytery had always permanency in its very conception and constitution and functions. We repeat the bishops assumed *their* power gradually, and in A.D. 314 with the commendation of Constantine, completed it. With the aid of the Emperor it was thrust on the world, but not with universal consent.

The original apostolic models were abandoned, and for sixteen centuries the hierarchy has had ample opportunity to show all that it contained. But neither in England nor Scotland, nor America, nor Italy, nor France, nor in any land in which it has prevailed in the most favourable circumstances, has it shown its claims to apostolic origin to be correct. It has failed in ability to win and to keep the people of the land. It has claimed to be national, and in that it has miserably failed. Christ's Church was to have no Lords. In that the Prelatic Churches have thrown over Christ's commands, and adopted a system where worldly ambition was to have the widest field. The Church was only to have spiritual function and spiritual government. Its place among civil and secular legislators is proof of its absolute departure from the principles of its Master, who said, "My kingdom is not of this world." Its attitude to the people, its intolerance of all dissent, its unchurching of churches more scriptural than itself, its toleration of error, its adoption of Romish unscriptural doctrine, and its disinclination or inability to rule in spiritual things, and to preserve the purity of the doctrine once for all delivered to the

saints, prove the Prelatic Church of England to be destitute of the marks of a great Scriptural Church, unable to face all that a National Church should do in conserving the truth of God.

To Bishop Lang we say much has happened since 1894. The Presbyterian Church of Scotland has not been in such a hopeful state for centuries, but not towards a surrender to episcopal demands. A great union has been accomplished, showing wonderful possibilities of a greater combination for all the Presbyterian Churches of the land, who have unquestionably preserved the purity of Apostolic doctrine, continuity of apostolic polity, and it is hoped soon the unity and the effectiveness of the divine intention, in the ancient synagogue of the Old Testament, revived and cleansed and remodelled with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, will soon become an accomplished fact before the world in a great union of Presbyterians of Scotland of every name.

II. *The Bishop of Salisbury*, in February 1902, delivered an address on the Bearing of the Study of "Church History on some of the Problems of Home Reunion" in one of the Murtle Lectures in the Marischal College, Aberdeen. From the prelatice side it was somewhat remarkable. One thing recommended was the study of the Church in the first age, and that some form of episcopacy was the normal constitution of the Christian ministry. With the first proposal most Presbyterians would agree. But that prelacy in any shape must form any part of a twentieth century reconstructed Church would be repudiated by those who have studied the command of Christ to eschew dignitaries in His house, and the utter failure of Prelacy to combine the people with all its enormous advantages. Any one who

can take broad views of the outlook of the age can the more readily admit that a union of all the Nonconformists, Presbyterians, and Independents alike, might be gathered into one great Protestant Federation, and the prelatic denominations in another, but a smaller camp. The continuance of the unscriptural Lord Bishop would be repudiated as an impediment to Church life, a contravention of Christ's orders, and inconvenient.

III. *The Bishop of St Andrews* hoped to pray all the presbyterians of Scotland into his paternal arms, and was anxious to establish prayer meetings for the object. But when the presbyterian brethren of Perth were about to establish such a meeting for prayer for Union, the right reverend gentleman refused permission to any of his clergy to be present or to take part. This example of episcopal hauteur very speedily ended the project.

CHAPTER XXXVII

OBJECTIONS TO THE PRESBYTERATE

WE have traversed the region between Prelacy and Presbyterianism. We have no wish to offend, and are more anxious that in the same land, Christian men should respect each other's convictions, avoiding discourtesy and uniting in work where that is possible—Prelatists, Presbyterians and Independents for our common Lord. With Independents and Nonconformists we labour pleasantly, for a great deal of their polity is according to the New Testament. While we are bound to exercise charity to all, we are equally bound to "prove all things, to hold fast that which is good."

When men who have drifted away from Scripture, impugn our right to any place in the Church of God, we are bound to vindicate our title for the honour of our Divine Founder and Guardian. We have to go back to the New Testament to trace the methods Christ prescribed, and His great object in planting the primitive Church, and to see how we have preserved the original designs. As presbyterians we have to show that we have adhered to the original model, and taken up the divine purpose of converting the world by the Gospel, and we are bound to make our simple, scriptural system the most effective instrument for the accomplishment of this great trust. Instead of recriminations and jealousies, we who bear the one name over the world must stand the closer, and go forth under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, for the conquest of the human family for Christ.

A few of the common objections to Presbyterianism may be considered to increase the effectiveness of the system. One is its *baldness*, some say it is cold and bald, though we have a high ideal to follow. It is deficient in show and grandeur, and it violates all the rules of æsthetics. Well it may be so, but we must remember that often the greatest complainers are the poorest judges of what our system ought to be. Are show and splendour and æsthetics worship? It is the greatest triumph of Satan when, in Christian lands, he can persuade men to believe that God will be equally well pleased with gaudy symbols and external pomp, as with the broken and contrite spirit. What does God care for all the pageantry of the world compared to the devout heart? Sights and grandeur He says are an abomination to Him. He wants the heart, not the outer vesture. The

man makes a prodigious mistake who listens to Satan instead of to God, and who tries to please God with an empty show. He has not yet discovered the alphabet of true religion. The Romanist points to his processions, but there is not a particle of religion in them.

Then as to matters of *taste*. It is worship God wants and insists on—the pure worship of souls redeemed by grace, and the greatest advocate of æsthetics will not venture to say that this is worship. Æsthetics when well considered may produce restfulness in a human soul bent on worship. In this respect there may be a lack in presbyterian places of worship; but it is as frequently a fault in the most pretentious cathedral, where want of repose in surroundings interferes with the worship of the Almighty. But we must remember that Presbyterianism has wonderful capabilities. It rises to heaven. It compasses the globe. It is capable of being made suitable to every human being. It can suit the wants of the greatest intellect, as well as the humblest. Its simplicity is of all things one of its greatest commendations to the various children of men. It pleased God at the beginning, and that is the best proof that it does so still. The Jewish synagogue, its original model, was even humbler than the most unpretentious place of presbyterian worship, yet Jesus Christ worshipped His Father there for years, and shared in all the worship of His Father's house.

It is also objected by many that it is deficient in the cultivation of *music*, and so far deprives worshippers of lofty expressions of praise to God. This has been a tender point with many to whom Presbyterianism is very dear, and

the writer would approach it with delicacy. For many years he was the minister of a large and important Presbyterian congregation, and during that ministry he did not advocate instrumental music, nor did he feel the want of it, either in congregational services, or in Bible classes, or Sabbath schools. But, at the same time, he never could see that there was any sin, in helping congregational praise by an instrument, if that were judged necessary by the elders—the proper guardians of congregational life. What is the rule in heaven cannot be sinful on earth, in aid of the songs of the sanctuary. Then it must not be forgotten that music is one of God's gifts, capable of great service in the worship of the Almighty, and He who has tuned the music of heaven will accept with satisfaction our richest offerings of praise. There are some who, from natural defects, are wholly unable to render it, and they cannot be rules for other men, nor throw stones on those to whom God has given higher gifts. Then there is some music which is sensuous and empty, existing only for the delectation of man. Christ will not compete with music-hall performances. There is another kind designed for God, in which man can bring the loftiest, holiest worship which the most spiritual can render to the Almighty. God desires the best in every offering. Thousands of years ago He laid down the principle in the worship of His people. The flock had to be searched for the best lamb for the sacrifice ; so with all parts of our worship, we have to express our gratitude and our devotion by the best of human efforts and praise.

But God has settled the principle for us. He gave

orders for the construction of instruments. There were times when instruments were used by Divine command. (Lev. xxv. 9 ; Numb. xxix. 1 ; Judges iii. 27 ; 2 Chron. v. 12.) At some sacrifices, at new years, new moons, seventh years, jubilees, their great civil and ecclesiastical events, trumpets were prescribed. The Holy Ghost placed in the old Psalter of the Church the words—

“With harp, with harp and voice of psalms, unto JEHOVAH sing,
With trumpets, cornets, gladly sound before the Lord the King.’

He would be a bold man to demand the erasure of these triumphant words to suit his fancy, and we should err by pressing contracted views of any means, in which God accepts our praise, or which would add to the effectiveness of our Presbyterianism.

We must not forget that the service of the sanctuary is a matter of spiritual profit, too much lost sight of in every Church. How is it that some can even make an instrument live? They make it sigh, or weep, or sob, or give expression to the loftiest, purest joy. We must remember that no one can express the praise of God, whose heart is a stone, who has never fallen down in the dust before the Almighty, and discovered the music of the broken heart, the true *de profundis*, and had the rapture of forgiveness in hearing God’s own voice saying : “Thy sins are forgiven thee, Go in peace.” The pulpit occupied by the true man of God with the new heart, with the musicians inspired by the Holy Ghost, will change the character of worship, and, for spiritual purposes, will make the familiar Presbyterianism a delight. The best organist is the man who has taken his degree from that

master musician the Holy Spirit, and has been taught the new song in Christ's school, and who has learned that divine secret, how to put the tender, wooing influence of Christ's love into his melody. He can show how music is one of the heavenly aids of the gospel. This is the ideal of the New Testament which many good men strive to reach in their worship of God.

The Jews settled this question thousands of years ago in their Presbyterianism. Horns and trumpets and citron branches were in their synagogues for special uses. If we were Jews, with all our hearts, we should use them too, to commemorate the wonderful history of God's mercy. If our fathers and mothers had helped to swell the songs of Miriam with timbrels on the shores of the Red Sea, or joined that glorious shout which Joshua led, and the blast of the rams' horns which brought the walls of Jericho to the ground ; or if they had sat by the rivers of Babylon, under the frown of the Almighty, with silent harps on the willows—give men such plaintive or triumphant vicissitudes to commemorate, and the rams' horns, and the trumpets, and the harps and citron branches will become radiant with the past incidents of a nation's history. To the man who could use them aright the simple trumpets would become the mightiest instruments to awaken the enthusiasm, and the gratitude, and the devotion of a mighty people. The loftiest music in the Temple had God's approval. The music of the synagogue was of a simpler kind, and sure we are that Jesus Christ took His own share in it at Nazareth.

So to those who believe in the scripturalness of their Presbyterianism, the power of music may have been too

long a neglected factor in their polity. We have no right to impose our dogmas, or our narrowness on other people. Instruments were in use in the original synagogue of our primitive Presbyterianism, many centuries before the days of Christ. They were employed in the high worship of the Almighty. Sankey with his little unpretentious organ filled our largest churches, drew tears from multitudes, and what was infinitely better, brought many as penitents to the feet of the Redeemer. Jesus Christ was never absent from the services of the synagogue, and never once did He protest against trumpets and their use in the lofty worship of His Heavenly Father. He pitied hypocrisy, He condemned a dead lifeless name for religion without the heart ; but what came from the soul He commended. From His boyhood He joined in the national worship of His people. We err greatly if we think we can be more spiritual than Christ, or if we imagine we can live a higher life, by neglecting anything which may contribute to the prosperity of His cause on this earth. The same sanctuary, the same psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, the same prayers, with the sacred influence of the Holy Ghost, will be clothed with mighty power. Presbyterians over the globe, are responsible for it if their Church has not all the beauty and the freshness and power which God meant their religious life to have, and all the agencies which God puts within their reach to make it the most attractive on the earth. It may be objected, that there is now no music in the synagogue. True ; but the Talmudists are to blame for that. The Jews are under a great national sorrow, and it is not a time for joy, they say. But are we in the days of our gladness,

in the sunshine of God's presence, to eschew joy and the expression of our gladness under the Gospel.

Lack of warmth.—But another reproach cast on our Presbyterianism is that it lacks devotional warmth. It is the objection of very many who say that the want of a liturgy is the cause. Now this reproach is worthy of consideration. It is well known that presbyterians have the very loftiest conception of devotional proprieties. That this may exist in some cases we have to admit, but that it exists even where a liturgy is found is equally true, and let the shame of it rest with those who produce it. The most beautiful words, without the gracious spirit of Christ, are of no more value than sounding brass. We have heard the stately prayers of the Book of Common Prayer so handled, and the solemn funeral service so rattled forth by the clergyman as actually to be a pain instead of a comfort, and bordering on the irreverent. The prayers printed or extempore are of little avail if there be no heart in the service. The lack of a devotional spirit, even with the most beautiful words, would chill the heart of an angel. The man who is seldom on his knees is easily known, whether he uses the most cultured speech or the homeliest garb of human language. Presbyterians give their responses silently and in the heart, while Episcopalians and Wesleyans give theirs, with more or less demonstration.

A case which rises up with fragrant memories is that of an old respected minister in the city of Aberdeen, and will show what Presbyterians aspire after. His lot was cast on troublous times. He had no specially attractive voice or manner—he never made use of a written prayer all his

life—but there was a softness and solidity thrown into the hard doric of his speech, which made him a singularly successful and popular minister. He gathered around him a large, influential and appreciative congregation. In the training of his Bible class he always insisted, that prayer of all things required to be well ordered, to be of public good and acceptability. In prayer there ought to be, he said, four things: Adoration, confession, supplication and thanksgiving, and the careful study of these would be sure to bring a rich reward. It is the lack of this which makes the ministry of some men so inefficient.

It is judgment-like when a man kills devotion by his own manner, and his lack of those essential elements, which lead to warmth and love and brotherhood. All this can be found even where there is a liturgy. No liturgy will ever take the place of a loving devout heart. There must be the fervent devout spirit if the ministry is to fulfil its trust. We have a high ideal in the New Testament, and the best of our Presbyterian ministers are striving to reach it, with their common well known methods. A liturgy in their hands might only produce a wooden ministry.

We may admit that our Presbyterianism has some defects, not in the system, but in agents, who do not realise the majesty and the capabilities of the ample organisation which God has entrusted to them; but wise men are continually understanding better what is within their reach in this pure, spiritual Church. But there is one thing that all our detractors cannot urge, that the presbyterate has been a failure, and that it has not contributed to the advancement and intelligence of the nation. We speak of

Scotland, where it has had free scope for the development of all its resources and fewer impediments, and where the aim of the system for self government and progress is obvious, which Christ its only head has put within its reach.

Education.—In the self-elation which is cultivated in the southern kingdom there is a depreciation of most things Scottish, not only in Church matters but also in education. It is here the matter can be brought to a test. There is not a schoolmaster in England, but decries our education, and our educational institutions, and parents are too ready to be imposed on. We have no public schools, it is said, worthy of the name, and our education is very defective. Well, we may be pardoned for a slight reference to facts. Our national education is higher than that of England. Our national Universities rank among the highest in Europe. Our medical departments have a world wide reputation, sufficient to attract young men by the hundred from every region of the globe. Many of our professors have a European fame. Our students, when they are so inclined, cross the borders to make trial of their culture at Oxford and Cambridge, and there take the highest honours as senior wranglers. Our Presbyterian ministers have all a University education. Private reading for entering orders is a thing wholly unknown in Scotland. Every aspirant to the ministry in the Presbyterian Churches, has to take four years in a University in the study of Arts, and four years in theology in some Theological Hall, so that all our Churches are served by University men. Let us take the last session, that of 1901-1902, a session consider-

ably under the average. We have four Universities, that of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and St Andrews, with a Divinity Hall in each connected with the Church of Scotland, and three Halls, besides, in the first three cities, connected with the United Free Church—thus, seven theological faculties. In the comprehensive Union of Presbyterians, which is so much desired in Scotland, these would be reduced to four. In most of the Halls we have foreign students, attracted from Bohemia, Italy, France, America and Ireland. We had 261 regular divinity students studying for the ministry of the Presbyterian churches of Scotland. Of these 198 were graduates, the great majority were M.A.'s, and a number B.D.'s, where study for a degree is optional. Besides, at each presbytery every student has to pass an examination. At various stages, and at the close of his studies again, it is imperative that each student must pass what is called the Board of Examination before he can present himself for license to preach, an examination which is very thorough, conducted by gentlemen specially appointed for the object, and an examination which is in every respect equal to that for degrees at a University. This carries no degree, as the Theological Faculty in the Universities alone is entitled to give a B.D. degree. But before license it is as good as cent. per cent. with the students. We do not present these facts in self-adulation. But the honourable gentlemen, professors and examiners, who combine to bring up our Scottish education year by year to such a high standard, are entitled to every recognition. We ask: Is there any country, or any church can produce any similar results? Our professors

are eminent men—known over the world for their valuable contributions to literature and scholarship—men of whom Scotland is justly proud. Our revered and beloved Hebrew Professor, Dr A. B. Davidson, lately deceased, stood high among the most illustrious Hebraists of the age. Each is in his own sphere showing the capacities of the Presbyterate, which Christ gave in the New Testament.

Presbyterian Scotland has no cause to be ashamed of her Presbyterate, with such a record. She can hold her head up among all the Churches of the world, and we ask, with all humility : Is there any system of the globe which can present such results without demonstration, and with her God-approved officials of presbyters and deacons ?

A very inviting field opens up in the missionary enterprises of Presbyterianism, from which we must reluctantly turn aside. It maintains efficient churches at home, and in every quarter of the globe. It has doubled or trebled itself in about one hundred years. All its work has been on the purest spiritual lines, without any help from materialistic sources like Sacerdotalists or Roman Catholics.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

CONCLUSION

IN closing, we may add—Is anything prescribed in scripture to guide the Church in her polity? It is assumed by some people that there is nothing but silence in the New Testament on Church government, and that Christ left the whole subject of the shape of the Church in later times, to

the discretion of His followers. All this was to be determined by circumstances, by locality, and by the character of the age. Expediency was to be the determining factor. Christianity was a living power, and it might be left to adjust itself to its surroundings, and to take the shape which might be the most convenient or profitable.

This theory is much in favour with those who would fain regulate their religion by the easiest methods which might be popular. For the many questions which arise in life they have a convenient answer,—what is the harm, and everything is regulated by the amount of injury it might produce. According to this theory there is nothing left for the world in the way of positive direction. Men are left very much to please themselves, and in doing so, it is supposed they will also please God with any thing.

Although there is no formal prescribed direction for Church Government in the New Testament, yet there are very many who believe, that the form of ecclesiastical life is not left to man's discretion, or to be regulated by expediency. Very many believe that there is enough in the scriptures to lead to a clear understanding, sufficiently authoritative on government, to show what God meant that to be. There was first that divine express command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." That was the leading regulating principle for every regenerate soul. Thereafter there was the most explicit instruction regarding purity of doctrine and the continuity of it, to show that the Church was not of man's construction, but that of God. "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful

men, who shall be able to teach others also," was the burden of apostolic anxiety, that the world might know that God would have all men saved. "If an angel from heaven should preach another gospel let him be accursed," said the Apostle. There is thus express scriptural precept. There is besides the example of Apostles. We are not at a loss to know how the divine intention was carried out, under the eyes and with the full instruction of the Apostles, by the ordination of faithful presbyters and deacons, for the permanence of the primitive Church. Principles were exhibited and the outlines of a Church government were put into operation, which in the hands of the Holy Ghost produced marvellous results, in the overthrow of evil and the conquest of the world for Christ. Men saw in this that the Church had a divine origin, that it did not rest on human wisdom, but that it was according to divine prescription. The principles and the doctrines to be used in the Church were sufficiently defined to lead men to a true Church, which had divine sanction and approval, and meant for universal acceptance and obligation. The only way to be assured of the presence of Christ in His promise, "I am with you always even to the end of the world," is to make sure that we are in the way Christ describes in His word, in possession of pure doctrine as well as original form. Then whatever others say in their self-assertion and their pride, we have the assured presence and blessing of God.

Gillespie and some of the great expositors of Presbyterianism were very clear on the essentials of the polity being binding and of great value, but that in what was merely circumstantial, there was room for many things being

adjusted by reason and Christian forbearance. It is when pride and arrogance interfere for the suppression of everything in which men may reasonably differ, in the diversities of gifts, in the differences of administration, and the variety of operations which are recognised in the scriptures, that men may claim freedom. In Ephesians iv. the Apostle ranks and enumerates the office-bearers according to their formal offices. In 1 Cor. xii. he classifies them according to their special gifts.

In gathering up all our contentings in vindication of the presbyterate, it has been shown that it was formed on the model of the synagogue, an institution which went back some say to Moses, and was certainly in existence in the period of the Persian domination, and was revived by Ezra, B.C. 457, and had the approval of the Almighty. The constitution of the synagogue was distinctly popular and presbyterian. The presbyters formed the presbytery of elders. These are scriptural words. Prelacy is never mentioned. This was the model of the Church of the New Testament. When a congregation was formed, faithful men were selected by the members, like the elders in the synagogue, who, for their work, were called "overseers." It was so in Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, ordaining elders in every church. Prayer with the imposition of hands was the order followed in every church. The presbyters were divided into ruling and teaching elders. The preaching of the word was the chief ordinance for the conversion of the world, not sacraments, essential though they were. "Preach the word" was the original command, "For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom

knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

There was the most express provision for succession, "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." Here are divine instructions for securing continuity and purity in doctrine and permanency and succession in office. "Incredible!" say sacerdotalists. Round those words they raise a cloud of dust to obscure the clearest meaning. "Presbyters never received instructions to ordain!" "They practise what was never given to them," they say. Could words be clearer? Faithful men were to be sought out. To them was to be committed Paul's pure doctrine. They were to be invested with every necessary prerogative to teach others also. The best proof of what was "given to them" is to see that they actually did ordain men under the eyes of the Apostles. Could the divine commission be clearer? The Apostle did not say send for a bishop to give effect to this. A diocesan bishop was the novelty of three centuries later. The presbytery ordained in those early days. But sacerdotalists cry out, "This is only one solitary verse!" Yes, only one verse! But is not one clear, explicit verse of scripture as good as a thousand, when nothing else was thought of? "The things thou hast heard of me!" Was ever anything said about an altar, or the mass, or purgatory, or auricular confession, or anything about a long gradation of officials from the humble curate up to the pope, the "Vicar of Jesus Christ," or to the archbishop, or ministerial grace through a bishop? Not a word! Where did this grace

come from? "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols, or with paganism?" "Touch not the unclean thing," God says. Is there any mention of apostolic succession? Not a word; it was a pure invention of later times. When Constantine revolutionised Christ's appointments, took the church into alliance with the empire, and the Episcopate was formed, he then gave it a position and a name. In the New Testament it has not even one verse to stand on. The difficulty is felt when men have to fabricate Scripture to impose their theories on thinking men. The succession about which Paul was anxious was higher. It was the evangelic and pentecostal succession of the Holy Ghost.

At a time when every attempt is made to ignore our Presbyterate and our national Scottish religion, are we to speak of our Presbyterianism with bated breath? Are we to be silent when we stand with an open Bible, since it had pleased the Lord and His inspired Apostles, to adopt the Presbyterian synagogue, as the model for the Church of the New Testament? The sacerdotalists of the day without the slightest scruple would pitch us over the wall of the Church of Christ, and hurl after us all the curses of the Bible, and nothing but uncovenanted mercies. To themselves they would keep all the blessings. They would deprive us of a Church, or a ministry, and sacraments, and the right of ordination. But we ask who has given them this authority? Who are they to try their powers with the influences of another world? We stand on the word of God, and we neither recognise their right nor their power. Having stripped themselves of every vestige of the Primitive Church, they are the last who should judge. But we shall

be judged by the word of God, and neither by the Pope nor Lord Halifax nor his Romish societies. We stand by our Scriptural Presbyterate and Christ's promise, "That the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

One final remark is especially for the young. In the noisy self-approbation of Anglo-Catholic priests of their position, and their condemnation of Presbyterians, they awaken thoughts among men which they do not exactly expect. Those who can satisfy themselves that they bear the marks of the Primitive New Testament Church, are only stirred to greater devotion to their own. They have no unscriptural lords of God's heritage, no interference with the prerogatives of the members of Christ's spiritual kingdom, and everything is in conformity with Scripture—no mass, no purgatory, no man-made religion. The assumption of an apostolic succession, without a particle of the apostolic spirit, only begets pity. Let us remember that this assumption of a higher heavenly grace, and a dignified heavenly position is a pure fiction, invented to give security in the cultivation of superstition against anticipated evil. But the apostolic evangelic pentecostal spirit is a great reality. The Presbyterate in Scotland shares in it to a large extent. May the day soon come when every presbyter, both the teaching elders and the ruling elders, to keep to the scriptural phraseology, bear this character the more. But there is one danger to which presbyters in Scotland are not sufficiently alive; we require a higher devotion to the common cause. Every member, every worker, every collector, every agent, every teacher, every deacon, every elder and presbyter should be filled with gratitude, that in our Presbyterianism

we stand on Scripture, and that we have nothing among us but what we have by title from the New Testament. We ought, therefore, to have greater enthusiasm and more devotion to one another, and our common interests. In some other churches, as among the Roman Catholics, men are specially trained in the utmost devotion to their own cause. Roman Catholics and Anglo Catholics may exceed us in gaudy exhibitions, and in histrionic paddings. There is no religion in these things, nor any power to save sinners, and to make this world better. It is the artifice of the devil to frustrate the grace of God, and to whisper to the actors that they are the choice spirits of the times.

But we cannot hide from our eyes the fact, that Presbyterianism suffers in Scotland from the action of thoughtless cranks, who forget that devotion to their own Church is most seemly, and ought to be the dominant feature of their character. "Feed the flock of God" does not merely mean the congregation to which the individual is called, but means, secure the unity, and peace, and prosperity of the whole communion. But many seeking notoriety take their place among the enemies of the Bible or the Gospel, and use their weapons often to the grief and the shame of brethren of the same Church, rather than their edification.

Others again, smitten with the idea that in a wider sphere they might achieve greater honour, yield to the enchantments of sacerdotalism. The training through which a young pervert will pass was described lately in the Scottish press and is of some interest. The young Scotsman in love with southern sacerdotalism is readily accepted, and, speaking metaphorically, has, "for the first

two years, to wash the floor of prelacy, and to be thankful for the honour." If thought worthy for the next two years, he will reach the "promotion of dusting the chairs." The clergy will next promote him to baptismal regeneration, by which he will be washed from all his sins, for the baptism by a presbyterian minister is of no more "value," they say, "than baptism by a coachman," and next he will be advised to be confirmed by the laying on of a bishop's hands and made "possessor of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit." Then he is as truly endowed by the Holy Ghost as Paul was. A "mark is placed on him thereby, which cannot be eradicated till the day he dies." If he shows sufficient respect to the prelates he may "enter holy orders" and be received as a deacon, and may have a chance of a living of £65 a year and certain mysterious bundles. If he be endowed with any special gifts from God, these may never see the light if he has not learned to kiss the ground under the feet of his lord the bishop ; but not even then if such gifts should overshadow the endowments of one who may not be one of God's strong men.

Will our young men with all their gifts, open their eyes to the philosophy of the facts and experience of life and look to their Bibles. There they will learn that those who love the Gospel and labour in the Gospel with heart and soul, are sure of success and God's blessing, where the labourer will get his hire and have ample room for the cultivation of all his talents. He may win the highest position in the land as a successful preacher and a servant of the King of kings. With all our appreciations and our gratitude we have to admit, that there is still ample room at

the top in the presbyterate, for the most gifted man of the age, and the greatest minister of Jesus Christ. Who is the man whom God is to send us, to fill the vacant place at the top, who will preach as Peter did on the day of Pentecost, who will place the Bible high up in its own dominant, imperial place in the world, who will make our simple presbyterianism a mightier factor in the evangelization of the globe ; and to whom God will say at the close, " Well done, good and faithful servant, Thou hast been faithful over a few things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord ? "

While we love all who love Christ, let every Presbyterian thank God that He has left His indelible mark on the Church of our fathers. It may not seem the most advantageous ; but let patience have its perfect work. Many of them found that the resolution which kept them attached to early convictions, was the most helpful to the advancement which came at last. No man who does his duty to God and his Church regrets it. One thing we can all do. We can continue in prayer as the early disciples did, for the power from on high, that the Holy Ghost may come again and unite us all, and make the Church the most powerful agency of the globe, for hastening on the day when all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest.

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